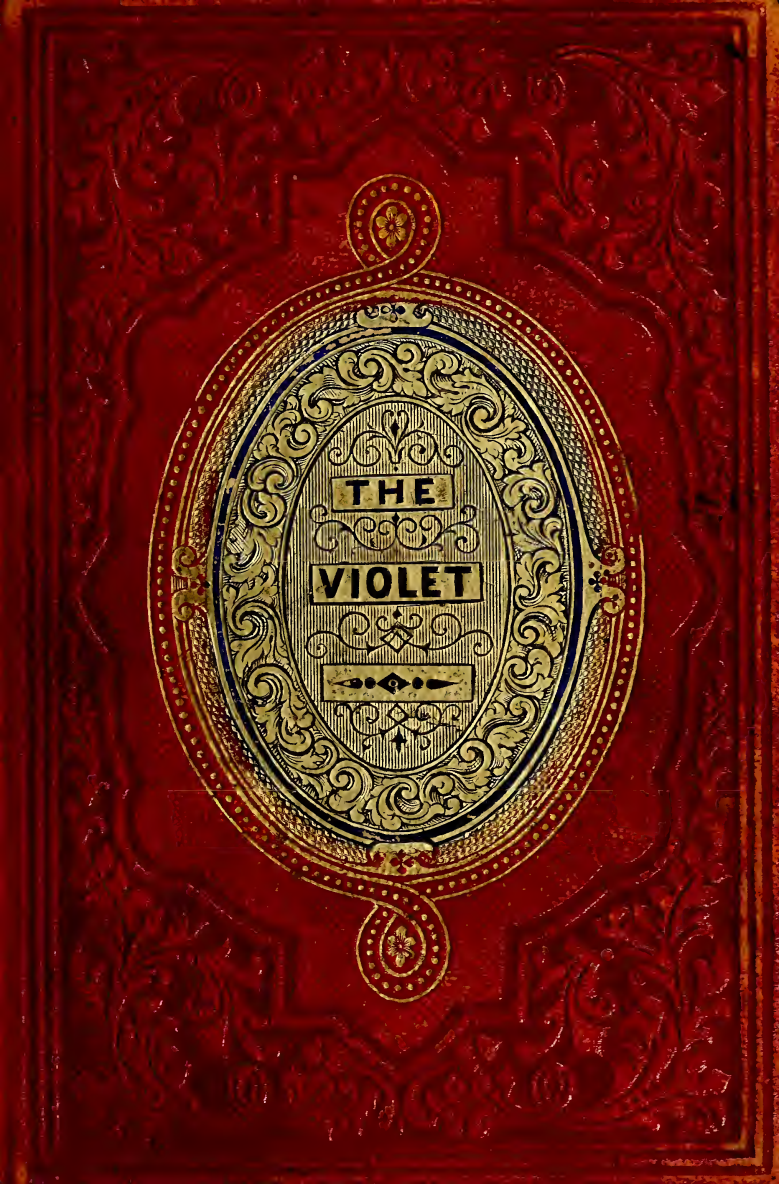
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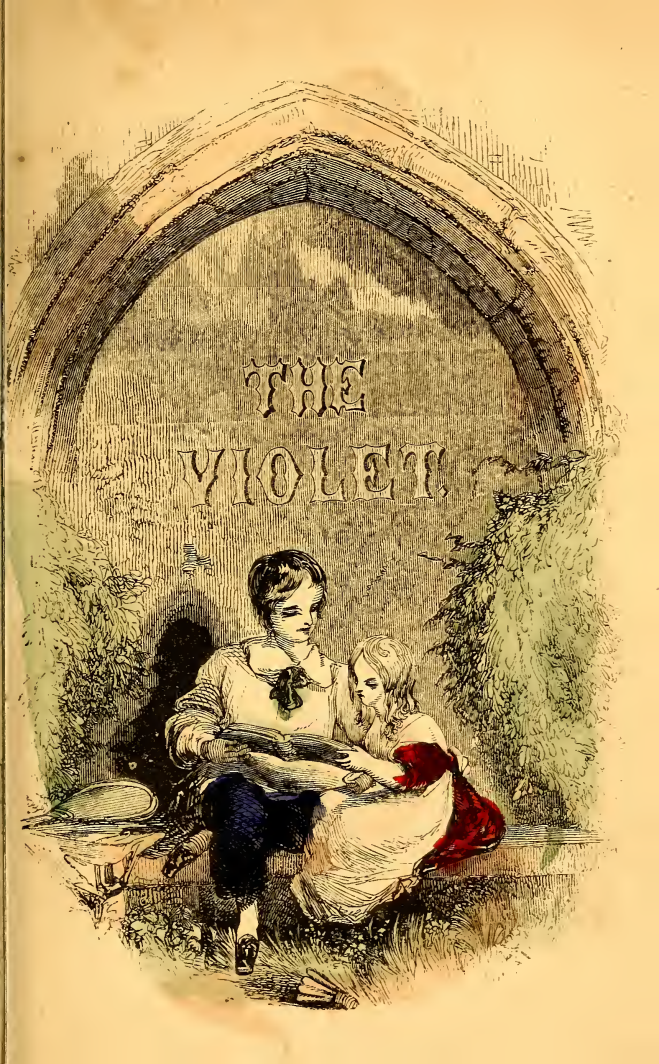
THE
VIOLET.

THE VIOLET

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New York:
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THE LIGHTHOUSE.

820055

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

"PAPA, I am making a collection of seals," said my dear little daughter Clara to me one evening. "Will you give me some from those belonging to your watch?"

So I made three good impressions of the seals I usually carried; but Clara was not yet quite satisfied, for after examining them for some minutes she said,

"Papa, are you very busy just now?"

"No, my dear, not very busy: I am only making a few artificial flies, and putting my tackle in order, for spring will certainly be here in a few weeks, though I believe that my

dear little impatient girl quite despairs of ever seeing violets or primroses again."

"Oh then, papa, will you be so kind as to tell me the meaning of the seals you have given me? I mean of the two smaller ones; for the other has only your coat of arms. Mamma has explained to me all the other seals in my collection."

"I can do that, Clara, while I go on with my fly making. Tell me then what you see upon the seal you are now looking at."

"I see a pillar standing upright, surrounded by other broken pillars, and ruins on the ground; and the motto is Latin, I believe, '*Erectus, tutus*,'—what is the meaning of that, papa?"

"The English of the two words is 'Safe whilst upright,' which you can easily understand as applied to the pillar; but it also means, that men, or women, or little children

are safe, so long as they are upright and honest, in their conduct towards God and man. Now what does the other seal bear?"

"I do not much like it. There is a sort of tower, which I am pretty sure is meant for a lighthouse, and no motto, but the date, July 21st.——Ah, I cannot make out the year, because it is in those tiresome letters which always puzzle me so. What can be the meaning of the lighthouse, papa? What do you whisper to mamma for, and why do you nod at each other so?"

"I asked your mamma whether she thought her daughter Clara was old enough to be made acquainted with the history of a family who once inhabited this lighthouse. She says I may relate the story to you. Well then, to explain this mysterious seal, which you say you do not much like, but which I would not part with for all the seals in the world, I will

read you a little tale which I wrote several years ago, on purpose for my dear Clara's amusement and instruction."

"A tale, papa! I thought you were going to relate a true history."

"It is quite true, my child; so bring your chair close to mine, and if possible, remain patiently, without asking any questions, till I have finished; and above all things, take care that you do not run these fish-hooks into your arm. I have called the tale

THE LIGHTHOUSE OF FLY-AWAY POINT.

Old Tom Haddock, the fisherman, had had a lucky day with his nets, and was sitting in the porch, at the door of his cottage, enjoying his pipe and cup of cider, and now and then talking to his wife, who was busily en-

gaged in-doors, making a savoury dish of fried fish and potatoes.

"I say, old woman," exclaimed Tom, "good-bye to the fine weather; we shall certainly have a blow to-night. A regular gale, you know; if we don't, you may say I know nothing about wind and weather."

No reply was heard from within, and Tom remained silent for some time, during which he finished his pipe and drained his cider-cup to the bottom, and pulled out his old turnip-shaped watch to observe the exact minute when the light would appear in the lighthouse on Fly-away Point, on the opposite side of the bay. This Point was distant from Haddock's cottage about five miles in a direct line, but more than six by land. Now you must know that it is a rule for all lighthouses to be lighted up exactly at sunset, which, according to Tom's almanack,

took place at three minutes past eight o'clock on the evening our tale begins. On this particular evening, however, there appeared to be an unaccountable difference between the time at the Point and at the fisherman's cottage; for though his watch declared that it was twenty minutes past eight o'clock, and the increasing twilight confirmed the assertion, still no light was visible on Fly-away Point.

Half-past eight! and Tom could keep silence no longer. So hobbling into the house, he exclaimed, "Here, wife! Betty! There's something the matter over the other side. Here, it is twenty-seven minutes past sun-down, and Hawkins don't show a light yet. And he such a careful, steady fellow too, and one that knows his duty so well! Many's the time he has told me that he wouldn't be ten minutes behind-hand in light-

ing up for as many guineas; for, says he, 'My masters, the Trinity Gentlemen, are good, kind-hearted masters in the main, but they make their servants do their duty. If I neglect mine, out of this house I go, that's certain.' So you see there must be something terribly wrong at the Point, for even if Hawkins was ill, his wife can manage the lamps pretty nearly as well as he can."

Mrs. Haddock, however, did not appear so much interested about the affair as her helpmate, and rather nettled him by saying, "Pooh, nonsense! What a fuss the man makes! Depend upon it, it is all right: either your watch is too fast, or there's a fog over the Point, so that you can't see the light."

"I tell ye my watch is *never* too fast, nor too slow neither; and though it does rain pretty smartly over the other side, I can see

the lighthouse, but not a glimmer of light in the lantern. 'My life for it, there is *something amiss*,' as the lobster said when the cook threw him into the hot water."

"Well, but my good man," replied his wife, leaving her cookery for a moment, and going to the door, "there must be 'something amiss' with your old eyes, for I can see the light plainly enough."

"So can I now, I declare!" said the fisherman. "Ah! now it brightens up fast. Thank Heaven, Hawkins has come to himself at last! But what *could* have made him half an hour behind his time? Well, let us hope the Trinity Gentlemen will never hear of it: they shall never know any thing of it from *me*, for that Hawkins is as kind-hearted a man as ever breathed, and so is his wife—a kind-hearted woman, I mean. How good she was to you, Betty, last winter, when you

were laid on your beam-ends with the *plumbago*, or whatever they call it."

"Ah! Heaven bless her," replied Betty. "If ever angels live in lighthouses, she's one. But who can this be coming across the sands? Get your glass, Tom, and take a look at her."

Haddock's old-fashioned wooden spy-glass was as great a favourite as his watch, though the tube was split and bound round with twine, and one of the glasses was cracked so as to divide the field of view into three pretty nearly equal portions. But Tom had looked through this glass for so many years that the cracks did not incommode him in the least; and after half a minute's examination of the approaching stranger, he exclaimed, "'Tis your lighthouse angel, Betty! No 'tisn't.—It is though:—'tis Mrs. Hawkins herself! I should have known her before if her face hadn't been hidden behind her

umbrella. She has got the rain before us, but we shall soon have it here by buckets-full; and look what a squall there is over the Point. But to think of her walking over by herself! 'What's going to happen next?' as the mackerel said when he saw the sprat with an admiral's gold-laced hat upon his head."

Never were three pair of eyes opened wider in astonishment than those of Mrs. Hawkins, Haddock, and his wife, after they had exchanged a few hurried questions and replies.

Mrs. Hawkins said that, early in the afternoon, a man dressed like a sailor, with a handkerchief tied over his eye, had called at the lighthouse, and begged that she would lose no time in going over to the fisherman's cottage, as Mrs. Haddock was taken suddenly and dangerously ill. So, as soon as she had arranged her family affairs, the benevolent woman packed up a few simple

medicines in a basket, for she had no contemptible knowledge of the healing art, and set off by herself for a six miles' walk over the sands, not without many expressions of regret from her husband that he was unable to accompany her.

Sadly perplexed she was when she found that old Betty Haddock was in excellent health, that she had sent no message, and that she knew nothing of the sailor-like man with the handkerchief tied over his eye. Of course Mrs. Hawkins could not explain the mysterious affair of the late appearance of the Fly-away light that evening, as she left home long before sunset; but she was firm in her belief that her good man had not neglected his trust. So all the blame was laid upon Tom's old watch.

Mrs. Hawkins willingly consented to remain that night at the cottage; and the rest

of the evening was spent in endeavouring to discover some motive for this ill-natured hoax, and in discussing the supper of fried fish and potatoes.

Old Tom, as he rolled over in his bed for the last time before he finally settled for the night, muttered to himself: "My watch serve me such a trick as this?—Impossible! Well, we shall see all about it in the morning, for I'll walk to the Point with Mrs. Hawkins, on purpose to ask her husband about it. But how it does blow and rain! A bad time of it for them that are at sea! 'Poor fellows, I pity them,' as the porpoise said when he"—

The sentence was finished by an incipient snore, and the sentiment expressed by the benevolent porpoise is lost to posterity for ever.

CHAPTER II.

LET us now cross the little bay, and ascertain for ourselves whether honest James Hawkins was a trustworthy light-keeper or not. But before we enter his house, we must take a view of the barren and desolate headland on which it was perched.

Desolate indeed, and almost out of the world it seemed! Not a trace of vegetable life, not the slightest tint of green, could be detected on the face of its perpendicular cliffs, of more than three hundred feet in height; and although the level space on which the lighthouse stood had a scanty covering of soil, only a little parched-up

grass and a few hardy stunted plants could be found even there. Hardy indeed must the constitution of a plant be, to bear the tremendous winds and driving salt mist which at times visited the summit of Cape Fly-away.

But how did this Point obtain such a remarkable and inappropriate name? I cannot tell you; but *perhaps* it might have been so called because, when seen from a distance, its gray colour and rounded outline gave it somewhat the appearance of a fog or cloud upon the horizon. Now, when a young sailor, or a landsman, sees what he believes to be distant land, but which his more experienced companions detect to be nothing but a bank of clouds, they say, "'Tis only Cape Fly-away." And well would it have been for many a shipwrecked mariner if *our* Cape Fly-away had been composed of mate-

rials as unsubstantial as a bank of clouds; for, alas! many and very dreadful had been the disasters which these gray cliffs had witnessed. In consequence of these frequent wrecks on the Point, or rather upon a treacherous reef of rocks which extended several miles beyond it, about two years before our tale begins, the *lighthouse* had been erected, and had proved so effectual in warning vessels from too near an approach to the dangerous coast, that during that time only one wreck had occurred. Can you then believe that there were demons in the human form who regretted the establishment of this light? I grieve to say that such wretches existed, and that their wicked devices had nearly succeeded in bringing about the destruction of some hundreds of their fellow-creatures.

In a deep, sheltered bay, on the other

side of the Point, was the miserable little village of Crabton Magna, consisting of not more than thirty houses, or rather hovels. I could never discover where *Crabton Parva* was situated, or what was its size, or population; but that has nothing to do with my tale. *Our* Crabton was inhabited by men calling themselves fishermen, but whose subsistence depended chiefly upon smuggling; and, before the erection of the lighthouse, upon the rich booty which they obtained from the vessels whose evil destiny threw them upon the reef. Finding, then, that this source of profit was taken from them, they had devised a plan for extinguishing this warning beacon, for a short time at least; for, said they, "If we can but put out the light for one good, blowing, dark night, we shall be pretty sure to have two or three vessels ashore before morning."

So they consulted together, and laid their plans accordingly. We have seen that they succeeded in deceiving Mrs. Hawkins, by a feigned message from the Haddocks, which induced her to leave home for a night; but how to manage with her husband was a much more difficult matter. To learn how this part of their scheme was brought about, we must take a peep at the lighthouse shortly after good Mrs. Hawkins had set off on her expedition.

A thoroughly substantial, well-constructed building this lighthouse was; and very needful it was that it should be well-constructed, to enable it to withstand the awful gales it was frequently exposed to. It consisted of a round tower, eighty feet in height, with a circular stone staircase; and on the top of the tower was the lantern, or the place in which the light was exhibited. But if

you have never visited a lighthouse, you can have very little idea of the sort of place this lantern was. Perhaps you think it might have been something like the small glass lanterns which you have seen people carrying in their hands on dark nights. Not at all like them, my dear little girl or boy, who may have honoured me by taking this book into your hand. The lantern of this lighthouse was an octagonal room, large enough to contain ten or twelve persons. The roof was made of copper, and the sides were composed partly of copper and partly of large panes of very thick plate-glass, set in iron frames. This very strong glass is always used in lighthouses, and is quite necessary, because they are generally built in very exposed, windy situations, where common window-glass would be blown to pieces. Sometimes, also, it happens, that

sea-fowl are attracted by the light, as moths often are by a candle; and such heavy birds as wild ducks and geese, dashing themselves against the glass, would shiver it to atoms, if it were not unusually thick and strong. Notwithstanding this precaution, it has sometimes happened that a large bird has flown with such violence against the lantern that the glass has been broken; and I have myself seen a pane of very thick plate-glass which had been so broken by a wild-duck. The bird was killed by the blow, of course: and in this manner light-keepers sometimes obtain a nice meal, which is particularly acceptable to those who are stationed on rocks, or small islands, where a supply of fresh meat cannot always be procured.

Sometimes the whole of the sides of the lantern are of glass; but in the Fly-away lighthouse the part towards the land was

composed of copper plates, for there would have been no use in exhibiting a light in that direction.

In the middle of the lantern was an iron frame, on which were hung eight large lamps, very similar to those which we use in our parlours; but instead of a globe of ground glass, they were each surrounded by a very large reflector made of copper, and coated with silver on the inside. By means of these reflectors, which were always kept as bright and polished as a looking-glass, the light of the lamps was so much increased, that, in clear weather, it could be seen at the distance of thirty miles.

James Hawkins and his family did not live in the tower, but in a very nice, well-built house at the foot of it; and no expense had been spared in making this house as comfortable as it was possible to be, in

such a dreary exposed situation. You would have been pleased to have seen how thick the walls were, how strongly the doors and window-frames were made, and how tightly they fitted. But all the comfort was *inside* of the house; for if you looked out of the door or window, the prospect was dreary enough. To be sure, there was a magnificent view of the ocean, and of the stupendous cliffs, whose base was washed by the waves; but a prospect of water and rock alone would soon have wearied your eyes, and made you long for a sight of green trees and of quiet meadows again.

But a naturalist might have found some employment on these cliffs. He might have collected some rare and beautiful lichens which grow on the rocks, and which are never to be found at a distance from the sea; and

he would have been delighted with watching the immense flocks of sea-birds that had chosen Cape Fly-away for a summer home, and reared their families in the caverns and ledges of the cliffs. Here might be seen puffins, razor-bills, guillemots, and several different kinds of gulls; but for a description of these birds I must refer you to books of natural history. I will, however, inform you, that though they differ very much from each other in form and colour, they are alike in this, they are all extremely *fond of fish*, and very expert in catching it. A little boy of my acquaintance once remarked to me, that there was another point of resemblance between them.

"It seems to me," said he, "that *white waistcoats* are quite the fashion with these sea-birds."

He was right, for the breasts of the birds

I have mentioned, and of many other sea-fowl, are as white as snow; and even those that frequent the shores of muddy rivers, and are constantly swimming and diving in dirty water, almost always contrive to keep their "waistcoats" clean and spotless. But I am so fond of birds myself, and especially of these beautiful sea-birds, that I forget that others may not feel much interest on the subject. I must now tell you something more about the inhabitants of the lighthouse.

The father of Hawkins had been a mate of a ship, and James himself had been bred up a sailor, and had made many voyages, but had been induced to leave the sea, *partly* because he did not much like the employment, but *chiefly* because he had married a wife, and thought it his duty to stay at home, and take care of her and of his

child. So, being fond of reading and retirement, he applied for his present situation, and succeeded in obtaining it, through the interest of a merchant, his former employer. Mrs. Hawkins is known to you already, and I have very little more to say about her, except that she was the daughter of a respectable tradesman, and that a better wife or mother never existed.

And her sweet little girl, Clara, now just ten years of age, deserved a good and careful mother. Must I draw Clara's picture? No, I shall not attempt to do so, for I have no talent in describing persons; and, indeed, where is the artist who can portray form and features with no better materials than pen and paper? Even the skilful portrait-painter finds it his most difficult task to transfer childish beauty to his canvas, and

it generally happens that, after a rigid side-by-side examination of the painting and the original, we are obliged to confess, "The eyes are exactly the right colour, so are the hair and eyebrows, and how well the artist has succeeded with the beautiful transparent complexion! I can find no fault with the form of the features; and that sweet smile upon the lips is like, oh, very like!—still—it is unreasonable, certainly—but so it is—*altogether I am sadly disappointed.*"

Let me endeavour to assign a cause for this melancholy failure; but I am an eccentric being, and my explanation may appear foolishness to others. *Who was it that had compassion upon little children*, and caressed them, saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven?" Now, to me, these words explain the mystery: and thus we see

in many sweet young faces an expression of heavenly innocence and purity, which we look for in vain in those of riper years; and this expression the utmost skill of the artist never has been and never will be able to portray! His clumsy materials cannot imitate it; with an equal chance of success might he attempt to paint a sweet sound or odour.

Well, then, if I cannot describe little Clara's features, what shall I say of her temper and disposition? Young ladies who may chance to read these pages, I assure you that she possessed almost all the good with hardly any of the unpleasant parts of your characters, if you will pardon me for supposing that you may not be *quite* perfect.

Young gentlemen, if you will have patience to read this story to the end, you will

see that she showed courage and determination which you might have been proud of at her age. But I must leave off praising her, and go on with my tale.

CHAPTER III.

Clara and her father had accompanied Mrs. Hawkins for a short distance on her way to the fisherman's, and, since their return, had been amusing themselves by reading and conversing, for James was never weary of the society of his dear little girl. Then they walked together to a curious valley, or fissure in the cliffs, where, under the shelter of an overhanging rock, James had erected a covered seat of rough boards. Clara called it her *summer-house*, but it had more the appearance of a large, ill-built watch-box. However, it was a very favourite station of hers in fine weather, especially when

the birds were breeding, for at this spot the rocks below and on each side were thronged by the numerous flocks of sea-fowl I have mentioned. On almost every projecting ledge might now be seen a company of queer, demure-looking puffins and guillemots, sitting erect *on their tails*, apparently, for the legs of these birds are placed so far back that they cannot stand in any other position. Not only on the rocks, but in the air, and on the water below, almost as far as the eye could distinguish them, might be seen myriads of these birds, swimming, diving, and flying backwards and forwards with food for their young families. A sensitive nose might even have detected a faint, indescribable odour diffused through the atmosphere, by the near neighbourhood of so many fish-fed bodies. It was very amusing to observe the old birds as they came

in from the sea, with a sprat, or other small fish, hanging out at each side of their bills; and little Clara laughed heartily at a mischance which sometimes befell them. For the wings of these birds are extremely small in proportion to the size of their bodies, and though their great strength enables them to fly very fast, they cannot do what a robin or a sparrow would find very easy. They cannot fly from one ledge of rock to another immediately above them, without first taking a wide circuit in the air, till they have gradually raised their heavy bodies to the necessary height. It therefore sometimes happened, much to Clara's amusement, that when an old bird, with his mouth full of fish, had arrived just opposite to his intended landing place, he would find that he had made a little mistake in calculating the distance, and that he was not high enough

by a few feet. The discovery was very annoying, no doubt, to a parent anxious to satisfy the cravings of a hungry family; but there was only one way of remedying the mistake:—the long, circuitous flight *must* be taken, till the clumsy bird had reached the proper elevation.

About an hour before sunset James recollected that it was time for him to perform his usual evening task of fetching a small cask of water from the spring, for there was no well at the lighthouse. So, leaving his little girl at home, with the cask on his shoulder, and a small tin cup and a funnel in his hand, he proceeded, first for about half a mile along the edge of the cliff towards Crabton, and then descended by a steep and rugged path, till he reached a little pebbly beach, where the spring trickled slowly down from the rock. But a long dry sea-

son had so much diminished the supply, that when James had about half filled his cask he was obliged to wait some time before the little pool from which he dipped the water had again filled.

Seated on a flat stone, with his eyes directed towards the top of the cliff, he observed three men standing in a narrow part of the path, and apparently watching his movements. He wondered what they could be doing there, for the little beach was quite unfrequented, except by those who came for water, and if these men wanted a supply, why did they not descend? But as honest James Hawkins had never given any man cause to be his enemy, he did not suspect them of an evil design, and he was proceeding to fill his water cask, when, accidentally casting his eyes seawards, he beheld a sight which might have

made no impression whatever upon any man but a light-keeper, but which caused him to desist from his employment, and hasten homewards immediately. In short, he beheld the angry, stormy-looking sun so near the horizon, that it was evident he had not a moment to lose, if he wished to reach home before lighting-up time. Therefore, with his half-filled cask on his shoulder, he ascended the steep, zigzag path, without pausing to rest, till, in a narrow pass between two masses of rock, he found his progress obstructed by the three men he had before observed from below, but in his haste to reach home he had entirely forgotten them.

Although his face was concealed as much as possible by a handkerchief, and by a large black wig, which ill agreed with his fiery red whiskers, James immediately recognised one of these men as Ben Bludgeon, a notorious

wrecker and smuggler, living at Crabton; but the other two men were strangers to him, for he had very little communication with the half-civilized inhabitants of this village.

"Good evening," said Hawkins, in a civil tone, finding that the men did not make way for him: "I will thank you to let me pass, my friends."

"Keep your friendship to yourself!" growled Bludgeon; "you don't pass this way to-night, I can tell ye: so trot down again, my man, or 'twill be all the worse for you."

"Not pass! what do you mean? I tell you I *must* pass, and immediately, too, for I am already too late. Perhaps you don't know me? I am Hawkins, of the lighthouse; and, depend upon it, you will be made to repent this uncivil treatment, Mr. —— "

Here James checked himself suddenly, recollecting how imprudent it was to show

that he had detected a man who evidently wished to remain disguised. Well was it for him that he did not mention Bludgeon's name, for the ruffian, laying his hand upon the hilt of a long knife, concealed under his coat, muttered in a hollow voice:—

"Mr. who? Why don't you go on? Come, you know me, do you, my lad?"

Our friend saw that he was in iminent danger, and, with great presence of mind, replied:

"To be sure I do, Mr. *Barton*, and I entreat you to let me pass quietly. You know of what importance it is that I should be at my post, to-night especially, for we are going to have a rough time of it."

James said this with a steady countenance, with his eye fixed on the villain's face, and saw that he had succeeded in quieting his suspicions, for Ben merely replied:

"Ay, ay, other people can tell when 'tis going to blow as well as you can. But, come, let us have no more of this nonsense; either go back quietly, or we'll serve ye this way," giving James's water-cask a kick, which sent it rolling down the path, and it was dashed to pieces long before it reached the bottom.

After some further remonstrance, James saw that it was useless to contend any longer with these men, who were three to one, and probably all armed. He was therefore compelled, most reluctantly, and in great distress of mind, to accompany them down the path to the beach, Ben Bludgeon going before him, and the others keeping close behind. When at the bottom, his conductors desired him to retire a few paces, while they held a consultation, apparently not a very amicable one, for Ben's hand was more than once laid upon the handle of his knife. Probably their

dispute related to the further disposal of their prisoner, for, as they approached him, James overheard the leader say to his companions, "I tell ye, not if you can help it. But if he makes a noise,—you understand me;—'tis of no use to flinch now!"

So Ben proceeded to ascend the cliff again by the path, for there was no other way of leaving Freshwater Cove, as it was called; and the two men left behind led James along the beach for a few hundred yards, till they came to an overhanging part of the rock, where they were sheltered from the rain, which now came down in torrents. Here they all sat down on a heap of dry seaweed, the prisoner in the middle. As his keepers appeared rather more civilly disposed than the surly Bludgeon, James endeavoured to make them converse with him, not altogether without a hope that he might be

able to persuade or bribe them to give him his liberty. But although his first attempt at conversation was simply a remark about the weather, he was immediately cut short with—

"I tell ye what it is, Master—*We* are under orders as well as yourself, and those orders are—'*Not a single word, good or bad.*' So keep quiet till morning, and whatever happens, *you* will come to no harm."

So poor James Hawkins was left to his own meditations, and very gloomy and distressing his thoughts were. For himself he had not much anxiety, either on account of his personal safety, or from supposing that any blame would attach to him for neglecting his duty. But James was a humane, good man, and his feelings may be imagined when he considered what tremendous mischief would probably be occasioned by the light

being extinguished on such a night as this; and he remembered of what great importance it was that it should be constantly kept up when once established, for seamen, knowing that a light was usually exhibited on the Point, and seeing none, would be altogether out of their reckoning, and would suppose themselves to be at a much greater distance from the land than they really were.

But these dismal forebodings were not James's greatest sources of uneasiness, for when he thought of his dear little girl, left at home by herself, his distress amounted to agony, and he exclaimed—

"God be merciful to my sweet Clara this night! She will die of terror before the morning!"

CHAPTER IV.

And how did poor Clara pass that fearful night?

When James left her to go to the spring, she proceeded to arrange the supper-table and to put some water on the fire to boil, for her father's very moderate glass of grog; for he still retained so much of a sailor's habits as to like a *comforter* before bed-time.

Young as little Clara was, her mother had taught her many domestic duties; and though she possessed very few of what are called accomplishments, she could do some things perfectly well, which it would puzzle many of you, my dear accomplished young ladies, even

to attempt. For instance, she could make an excellent pudding, and had many times gone through the whole process without any assistance, or even a word of advice from her mother. Then, what intense delight she felt when her father, having tasted the produce of her skill, would exclaim, as he held his plate for a second helping, "A famous good pudding, this! Who made it? Not my Clara, to be sure!"

The notable little girl had placed every thing ready for supper, and the water was just beginning to sing, when she thought it must be quite time to expect her father's return, and she went out to look for him. But a sudden squall of wind and rain soon drove her back again, saying to herself, "Ah! how wet he will be!" and then she went up-stairs to fetch another jacket for him to put on when he returned, and got ready

the little lantern which he used when he lighted the lamps, for she knew that he would perform that duty before he sat down to supper. Soon it began to grow dusk, and the poor child's surprise at her father's long absence was changed into fearful misgivings that some terrible accident had happened to prevent his return. She remembered how punctual he always was in discharging his duty, and she knew that the sun had set for some time, for from the window she had watched him go down, like a ball of molten brass, into the ocean.

"Oh! if he has fallen down over those terrible cliffs!" exclaimed she, opening the door a little, to see if the weather would allow her to go in search of him, but a tremendous gust blew it instantly wide open, and she had no little difficulty in closing it again. And now the rain poured down like

a cataract, and the lightning flashed, while the thunder could scarcely be heard, so terrible was the roar of the wind. That poor little child might as well have attempted to have fled to the moon as to have walked fifty yards against that night's gale. She saw that it was impossible for her to venture out, and she returned, almost heart-broken, into the snug little kitchen. Here the sight of her poor father's jacket, hanging over the back of a chair by the fire, entirely overcame her, and she burst into tears, exclaiming,

"He is dead—he is dead! He will never wear it again! I am sure he would come back to me before this if he was alive." Then down she sank upon a chair, in an agony of terror and distress.

And now I am coming to a part of my tale which, perhaps, some of my readers may think improbable; but it must be remembered, that

Clara was no common child, and she performed no common action that night. In the midst of her bitter grief for her father's loss, and terror at her own situation, she recollected that they had been employed that afternoon in reading together an account of a most melancholy shipwreck, in which more than a hundred persons, and several of her own sex and age, had perished. She remembered also that she had asked her father whether, if there had been a lighthouse on that part of the coast, the shipwreck would not have been prevented. He replied that most probably it would, and added, "If I were so wicked as to neglect my duty, and not light our lamps, on some very dark windy night, perhaps, before morning, a disaster as terrible as that we have just been reading about would happen on the Fly-away Reef."

All this had made a deep impression upon the mind of the intelligent little girl at the time; and now, as she sat with her face buried between her knees, and sobbing as if her heart would burst, the remembrance of the whole story, with her father's observations upon it, appeared, she knew not why, to be strangely mixed up with her present sorrow. Then, by degrees, a fresh feeling of distress came over her,—an indistinct fear that she had some painful duty to perform; and she began to say to herself, "If I could but light the lamps! Ah, no! I can never do it.—And to keep them burning all night, too! And then I must go up that frightful staircase by myself! Oh, my dear, dear father, if I could but tell what has become of you!"

Then she remained perfectly still for some minutes—so quiet that you would have thought she had been asleep. But no, she

was not asleep, for a terrible conflict was going on in her breast, and *the good spirit gained the victory over her fears!* So she arose from her seat, wiped her eyes, and lighted the little lantern, saying aloud, "I *will* try to light the lamps. If I can but get to the top of the frightful stairs, the worst will be over."

Now I must confess that Clara, though a very sensible child, was rather silly in one respect, for she had always had a great dread of this cold, dark, gusty staircase, with its one hundred and seventeen stone steps; and she could never be persuaded to ascend them by herself, even in the day-time. Therefore you may imagine how terrified the poor child was, when she opened the door of the passage which connected the dwelling-house with the bottom of the tower, and found herself at the foot of the dreaded

stairs. The tower had no windows in it, but here and there a long, narrow slit, or loophole, in the wall, to admit a little light and air, and through these openings the wind whistled, and roared, and almost *screamed* in the ears of the lonely tenant of the tower. Clara has often said that she can remember very little of what happened after she had ascended a few steps, for her fright almost deprived her of her senses; but she thinks that in her frantic haste to reach the top she must have fallen down several times, for her knees and elbows were sadly cut and bruised. But she reached the lantern, closed the little door, *and was happy!*

Yes, she felt comparatively happy, in having accomplished that part of her task which she most dreaded; though you would have thought that to have spent the night in the lantern of a lighthouse, in such a gale, would have

been very terrible indeed. As you have never been in such a situation, you can form no idea of it whatever. Not only did the awful wind and thunder roar ten times louder than below, but the rock-based tower itself yielded to the blast, and trembled fearfully. Clara had not been two minutes in the lantern before she repented of her attempt, and heartily wished herself safe in the house below again. But the terrible stairs, like an impassable gulf, lay between her and the place of refuge, and as her courage revived by degrees, she remembered the resolution she had made to endeavour to light the lamps.

These were all ready-trimmed, and as she had often seen her father light them, she began to hope that the difficulty was not so very great. So she took off one of the glasses, and after turning round the top of the lamp till it would go no further, she

found she was wrong, and moving it in the contrary direction, soon, to her great joy, the circular wick made its appearance. Then, after several trials, she succeeded in lighting one side of the wick with a piece of paper: she replaced the glass, and went on to the next lamp. She turned this the right way at once, and had just persuaded the obstinate wick to burn, when, crack! went the glass of the first lamp, some of the fragments falling on the floor; and Clara beheld the long, red flame towering up, and terminated by a column of black smoke. She had raised the wick a great deal too high; and now, in her haste to remedy the error, she turned it down so low that the flame was quite extinguished.

"Oh! I never shall manage it," said she, removing the remaining part of the broken glass; but here, alas! was a fresh misfortune, for it was very hot and burnt her fingers

so that she could not help crying out with pain. The poor little girl's spirit was almost broken, and another mishap would probably have made her abandon the attempt in despair, when, looking at the second lamp, she saw that the wick had lighted all round, and was burning with a beautiful, clear, white flame. Forgetting her smarting fingers, Clara immediately placed a glass over it, and soon found that, by turning the top round carefully and slowly, she had full command of the flame, and could diminish or increase it at pleasure. So she raised it gradually till it gave a brilliant light, but without any smoke; and now the quick-witted child fully understood her business. In a short time all the lamps were burning beautifully, while Clara for a while almost forgot her grief and terror in her admiration of the brilliant suns she had created.

Never had the Fly-away lighthouse sent a brighter gleam across the waters than it did on that night! The watchful mariner hailed the appearance of that warning star from a distance, and was sure, by its position, that he was safe from the dangers of the fatal reef. But could he have known that its splendour was maintained by the hand of a weak and trembling child, he would surely have bowed in gratitude to that Being who is so often pleased to confer his greatest benefits upon mankind by means which would appear to us altogether inadequate for the purpose.

What was to be done next? Clara knew that the lamps would not burn brightly for more than four or five hours without trimming and a fresh supply of oil; but here no difficulty would occur, for another set of eight lamps stood ready to take the places

of the first. But *here* lay the great and sore difficulty—to prevent herself from falling asleep, and neglecting her trust! For the first hour or two of her lonely watch she was wakeful enough, for the novelty of her situation and the uproar around her prevented her from feeling drowsy, to say nothing of her own sad thoughts. But sleep, though long chased away by sorrow, will at length weigh down the eyelids of the most wretched, even of the condemned criminal in his cell; and now Clara began to feel its oppressive influence stealing over her, and by far the most difficult part of her task remained to be performed. But she resisted nobly, and repelled the unwelcome visitor with a determination which can be sufficiently admired only by those who have seen how overpowering are the attacks of sleep upon very young eyelids. Clara knew

that if she could by any means keep herself awake till it was time to change the lamps, she might then sleep in peace, for in a few hours after it would be daylight.

And she *did* keep awake till nearly two o'clock in the morning, as was afterwards ascertained by the quantity of oil consumed; and then, finding that the lamps would no longer burn brightly, she was sure that it was past midnight. So she lighted up the fresh set without the smallest accident or difficulty; she watched them for a few minutes, to be quite sure that all was right, and then, the sweet child having faithfully discharged the duty which had so strangely fallen to her lot, sank down upon the cold stone floor, and was in the land of dreams in an instant.

CHAPTER V.

We left James Hawkins seated on the heap of sea-weed between his two keepers, who kept watch alternately. But James never once closed his eyes, for he had not sufficient confidence in his companions to be sure that it would be quite safe for him to do so. Heavily and slowly passed the time, till about an hour before dawn, and then was heard at a distance the sound of some one walking over the loose pebbles.

Here I must tell you that the lighthouse could not be seen from any part of Freshwater Cove; and though the top of the tower was visible to the inhabitants of Crabton, the *dark* side of the lantern was towards

them, and in order to see the light, it was necessary to sail out into the bay for three or four miles, or to walk about the same distance from the village to Fly-away Point.

When the stranger had approached within speaking distance of our party, he was hailed by the watchman with a gruff, "Who's there?"

"Tom Grummage," was the reply; "and I've got news for ye; so leave your man, one of you, and come here."

Hawkins could hear nothing of the conversation that ensued, but he feared, from the earnestness of their manner, that the scheme of the Crabton wreckers had succeeded, and that a ship had been discovered stranded on the reef. He was mistaken, however, for in a few minutes the two men came up to him, and he that had guarded him during the night said,

"Now, Mr. Hawkins, you may go home as soon as you like; and as you've behaved quietly, I'll tell ye for your comfort that your light is burning as brightly as ever it did, and has been burning all night, for what I know to the contrary. But I say, Hawkins, when this comes to be talked of, and we get into trouble for to-night's work, say a good word, will you, for Jack Bracey; for I can tell ye that, if it had not been for me, Ben would have pitched you over the cliff, as he did your water-cask. He's a rough fellow, that Ben Bludgeon.—There, now, I have let out his name! But you knew him well enough before, in spite of his wig; and though you cheated *him* with your 'Mr. *Barton*,' you didn't take *me* in."

Of course, Hawkins could promise nothing, but he thanked Bracey for his interference; and being now at liberty, need I tell you that

he ascended the cliff, and ran to his home in half the time that he had ever taken to traverse the same distance before?

Panting and breathless he stood before his own door. It was on the latch. He entered the kitchen and struck a light. The object of his eager search was not there. Then he examined every room of the house, calling with faltering voice for his child, but his ears were gladdened by no reply—his home was silent and desolate. "God of heaven," he cried, "she has ventured out in search of me, and has perished miserably in the storm!" Suddenly a new thought struck him, and a faint gleam of hope shone upon the father's heart. "Ha! the light has been burning all night! Can it be possible?" In an agony of suspense he ascended the lighthouse stairs—he gained the lantern, and there, stretched upon the floor in child-

hood's death-like sleep, was his lost one, his own beautiful Clara. She was soon aroused by the sound of her father's well-known voice, and as James pressed her to his heart, this strong man was overcome, and he mingled his tears with hers. After a few brief questions, James carried his little girl down into her own room, and left her to enjoy a sound repose. Then he lay down upon his own bed, but sleep visited not his eyes, for his thoughts were with his dear little child: and as he pondered over the events of the night, he exclaimed, "I never knew what happiness was till now! May God give me a thankful heart!"

About ten in the morning, the weather having cleared up, Mrs. Hawkins, with old Tom Haddock and Betty, made their appearance. Very much astonished they were when the events of the past night were related to

them, and you may be sure that the fisherman was delighted to find that his old watch had not deceived him. Then little Clara, who appeared in very good spirits after her fright and want of sleep, gave the particulars of *her* share of the night's adventures. Nothing can be more affecting than a tale of sorrow related in the simple but eloquent language of childhood; and as the little girl described her grief for her father's supposed loss, Mrs. Hawkins and Betty could not restrain their tears. James sat in silence with his dear Clara on his knee, "but the water stood in his eyes!"

Now this most expressive manifestation of intense happiness was a phenomenon which old Tom could not at all comprehend, and he muttered to himself—

"What both of 'em a crying? And, I declare, James seems half a mind to join

in with the women too, because he's alive and able to eat his breakfast this morning, instead of being pitched over the cliff and made into victuals for the crabs and dog-fish. Well, I am not so foolish as that, neither; though, when I look at that pretty little maid, and think of what she has gone through this night, 'I do feel uncommonly queer, to be sure,' as the hermit-crab observed when he fitted himself into a fresh shell."

But let us leave this funny old man, and get on to the end of our tale as quickly as possible. Mr. Hawkins lost no time in acquainting his masters, the gentlemen of the Trinity-House, with the particulars of this affair, and prompt measures were taken to secure the Crabton conspirators; but those most deeply concerned in the plot had put to sea in their boat, and it was feared had

escaped to the coast of France. However, they were captured at last, at a small English seaport, more than fifty miles from Crabton.

It came out on their trial, that the original design of the wreckers was to have marched in a body to the lighthouse, to have utterly demolished the lantern, and to have murdered the inmates of the house if they had made the least resistance. This was the amiable Bludgeon's favourite plan; but his companions, either more humane than himself, or more fearful of the consequences, had compelled him to abandon it. The gang knew that the little girl was left in the lighthouse, but they did not believe it possible that such a child would be able to frustrate their evil designs, neither were they aware that their scheme for extinguishing the light had failed till the night was almost past.

So Ben received his deserts in a sentence

of transportation for life, for it was proved that he was the leader of the gang; but Hawkins said all he could in favour of Bracey and his companion, believing that he owed his life to their interference, and in consequence they were let off with two years' imprisonment.

And so much for punishments—now for *rewards*. It was ascertained that, on the night when Clara kept her lonely watch in the lantern, several very richly-laden ships, with many passengers on board, had passed Fly-away Point, and the captains and pilots had no doubt that they should have been lost on the reef, if the light had been extinguished.

The owners of these ships and the passengers were therefore determined that the young light-keeper, who had been the means of saving so many lives and so much pro-

perty, should be well rewarded for her good conduct; so they began a subscription, to which many of the wealthy merchants in London contributed, and the Trinity Gentlemen liberally engaged to double the sum, whatever it might amount to. This promise induced many to increase their donations, and one old, cross East Indian merchant, who at first had refused to subscribe any thing, when he heard of this engagement, immediately put his name down for fifty pounds, for he had a long-standing feud with the Trinity Board, and, said he, as he wrote his name in the list, "I care nothing for this silly chit of a girl, but I hate those lighthouse people, and I'll make them pay another fifty pounds."

But Clara's other friends gave from better motives; and though the "lighthouse people" had to pay a great deal more than they

had expected, they did not begrudge their money, and our young friend was now a wealthy little lady, with a fortune of more than a thousand pounds.

As this money was placed in her father's hands for her benefit, James determined to give up his situation as light-keeper. He therefore took a farm in an adjoining county; and though at first, as might have been expected, he made some sad blunders in his new employment, he soon succeeded in getting out of his difficulties, by industry and attention, and an occasional word of advice from his neighbours. In a few years he was a thriving man, and was able to afford the means of giving his daughter Clara, to whom he owed his good fortune, a much better education than farmers generally consider necessary for their children.

CHAPTER VI.

In order to explain the introductory conversation at the beginning of this tale, I must now entreat my readers to pardon me for bringing part of my *own* history before their notice. But I will be as brief as possible.

About eight years after Mr. Hawkins became a farmer, my parents being both dead, I went to reside with my uncle, who had been appointed my guardian. From him I first heard the story of the Fly-away lighthouse, and learned that James Hawkins was a tenant on his estate. My good uncle, finding that I was much interested in the account, took me with him the first oppor-

tunity to call at the farm, giving me this caution as we dismounted from our horses:—

"Now, Fred, take care of your heart! for the young light-keeper is a marvel of beauty, I can tell you. Even my old eyes can see that."

I was ever the most perverse, disobedient creature in the world! Even when I really meant to be particularly good and tractable, something or other was sure to happen to raise the spirit of opposition within me. So it was in this instance. I loved my uncle sincerely; he was my benefactor, my second father; and when I took up my abode under his roof, I wished, and fully intended, to obey him in every thing. How did I abide by this resolution? He had desired me not to be captivated with the beauty of "the young light-keeper," as he always called her, and I had not been half-an-hour in her company before I

said to myself, "Either Clara or nobody! I will marry her, if she will have me, in spite of all the uncles in existence; and if she won't have me, I will join the army, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth from her presence. Welcome danger and death, if sweet Clara may not be mine."

I had a sad ride home! My uncle teased me with questions about my college doings, and received very silly answers, no doubt. The only question of his which I fully comprehended was, whether I did not think Miss Hawkins pretty. I answered as coolly as I could, and was glad to take refuge by starting another topic, rather than endure my uncle's cross-examination on this subject.

I walked over to the farm by myself the next day, with my fishing-rod in my hand, and requested Mr. Hawkins, who was a most

accomplished fly-fisher, to show me the best pools in the stream which ran close by his house. He said that it would be quite useless to attempt to fish that morning, for the wind was decidedly east, and very cold. I knew all this before I set out, and I quite agreed with him that it would be better to defer our fishing excursion. So I sat two hours talking with Clara and Mrs. Hawkins, and returned home more than ever determined to be *disobedient*.

My uncle was much engaged, settling some business with his lawyer, for a week or two after this, and I made almost daily calls at the farm, sometimes with a tolerable excuse for my intrusion, sometimes with a very lame one, at last with none whatever, except that I had not seen Clara for four-and-twenty hours.

Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins always received me

with perfect civility, though I fancied, from their manner, that my frequent visits were not quite acceptable to *them*. But the grave looks of the parents could not scare me away, when their sweet daughter smiled like a morning in spring. So we went on thus for two or three months longer, and my fate was decided. I did not join the army, but I won the heart of "the young light-keeper;" though the consent of her parents was not to be obtained, except upon the hard condition that my uncle should approve of my choice. My uncle approve of it, indeed! How could *he* be expected to approve of a match between his heir, the last hope of his ancient family, and the daughter of a man who had been a common sailor, and who could not even tell you the name of his great-grandfather. But I did not know my uncle when I reasoned thus. Though eccentric in his habits, and

somewhat rough and hasty in his manners, he had a kind and feeling heart.

One morning, after a very silent breakfast, I observed with some alarm that the old gentleman followed the servant to the door, and said to him, in a low tone, "If anybody wants me, say I am engaged, and not to be disturbed on any account till I ring." He then resumed his seat, and addressed me.

"Fred, my dear boy," said he, "I am sorry to observe that you have seemed out of spirits lately. When you first came to me, you were just the sort of companion I like —all rattle and fun; but now—come, make a friend of your old uncle, and tell him all about it. *What's the matter* with you, Fred?"

"I am sure, sir, you are very kind, but there is nothing the matter with me, that I know of. I beg pardon if I have seemed out of spirits, but I am perfectly well, I assure you."

"Oh, very good! I am not your physician, young gentleman. Then perhaps you will allow me to ask you what you mean to do with yourself till dinner-time?"

"I meant to try for a trout, if you have no objection, sir—I mean, if you do not want me this morning."

"Indeed! and what stream do you mean to exercise your skill upon?"

"I think I shall try the Red-Brook to-day. The fish are finer there, and the banks are less encumbered with brushwood, and the water——"

"Now, my dear Fred, I have fished in every river within a dozen miles of us, for more than half a century; so you need not tell *me* what sort of a stream the Red-Brook is. If I pleased, I could trace the course of twenty rivers for miles, could tell you every field they pass through, and every house that

stands on their banks. For instance, I know that the *Red-Brook* runs very near the house of my tenant, honest *James Hawkins*, though perhaps you might have forgotten that fact, when you enumerated its other merits."

Never was a poor detected lover in a worse predicament! I tried to look unconcerned, but failed entirely; and I blundered, and stammered sadly, while I answered my cruel questioner, by saying that I believed the Red-Brook *did* pass pretty near the Hawkins's house.

"So!" said my uncle, "you are beginning to learn a little of the geography of the country, I see! But now I will leave jesting, and will thank you for your serious attention for a few minutes. To come to the point at once then—*Fred, I know the whole affair!* I know that, like a foolish fellow, you have engaged to marry Miss Hawkins—I know all

this; and a great deal more, though you have not thought proper to make a friend of your old uncle. Yesterday morning, James Hawkins came up here, saying that he wished to quit his farm, and, like an honest, open-hearted fellow, he gave me his reasons for this step. He said that as he knew I should never give my consent that a nephew of mine should marry his daughter, he thought it better to remove her to a distance, hoping that she might then forget her silly lover. *He* did not call you silly, though: that's an improvement of mine.

"Now, Fred, I don't approve of this match at all. I never *have* approved of unequal matches; and let me tell you that the young light-keeper, pshaw! that Miss Hawkins, with all her beauty and excellent qualities, is not a suitable match for you. I am not thinking about her want of fortune. You will have

enough of your own, and I despise a man who would take a trip to the altar to pick up a bag of gold. My poor father used to give me this advice, and if you can put it into fewer or better words, you are a clever fellow; 'Tom,' said my father, 'when you marry, seek for a fortune *in* a wife, and not *with* a wife;' meaning thereby that she should be a treasure herself from her good qualities.

"Well, Fred," continued my uncle, "I have given you a long lecture, but I have not quite finished yet. I have said that I do not approve of unequal matches, but I like them better than *broken hearts!* So, if you assure me, which of course you will, that you and your pretty little Clara are both determined to break yours all to pieces, if you are not allowed to marry, why I suppose I must give my consent, that's all. There, give me your

hand, my dear boy, and now go and see how the trout will rise in the Red-Brook this morning."

My heart was too full to reply to my kind, generous uncle. I pressed his hand in silence, and was leaving the room, when he called me back.

"Oh! I have forgotten one thing; don't catch all the trout in the Red-Brook this morning, Fred, for I mean to wet a line there myself some fine day, if my rheumatism will let me—and, stop a minute, what a hurry the silly fellow is in! You may take back to Mr. Hawkins his notice to quit the farm. He won't think it necessary to leave the neighbourhood now, I suppose: we must find him a larger farm, though, and a better house, if he is to be my nephew's father-in-law."

I closed my book, and my dear little Clara, who, like a good child, had not once interrupted me while I was reading, now opened wide the floodgate of her impatience, and broke forth into a torrent of exclamations and questions. When these had been answered, she said:

"Yes, papa, I think I understand it all now. But is mamma really a *common sailor's daughter?*"

"Your mamma, my dear Clara, is the daughter of James Hawkins, who, though now the possessor of wealth and land of his own, was formerly what you call 'a common sailor;' do you love her the less on that account?"

"Oh no! nothing can possibly make me love dear mamma less. Ah! *now* I understand why you had a lighthouse engraved on your seal. I am sure I shall value the impres-

sion of that seal more than all the rest in my collection."

"I hope you will not forget the history connected with it, my dear child; and when you look at the seal, reason thus with yourself:—My mamma was but a very little girl, and yet by her good conduct she saved the lives of many persons, and prevented the destruction of much valuable property. For this action she was rewarded, and was at length raised to a situation in which she has had the means of being much more useful to her fellow-creatures than she could possibly have been, had she remained all her days an inhabitant of a lighthouse.

"*Can I, her daughter, imitate her in any way?*"

"Ah, no! I never in all my life shall have an opportunity of doing so much good as she has done; and even if I *had* the op-

portunity, I have not her courage and determination."

"Perhaps not. Still I think that every little child may be of *some* use in the world, for we know that God has created nothing in vain, not even the smallest insect or plant which we trample under our feet, as if they were altogether worthless and insignificant."

"Well, then, I am certainly better than a plant or an insect, for God has given me understanding, to teach me to distinguish between right and wrong, and to enable me to do good to others.

"But how can I, a little, helpless child, who require assistance myself, almost every hour in the day, how *can* I be of the smallest use to others. Ah! I will not puzzle about it any longer, but will go directly to my dear mamma, and beg her to teach me how to imitate 'The young light-keeper of Fly-away Point.'"

THE INCENDIARY.

THE INCENDIARY.

CHAPTER I.

"How many hands will you have in the hayfield to-day?" said I, one morning at breakfast, to my host, farmer Trimmer, under whose roof I had been lodging for more than a twelvemonth.

"How many, sir!" replied the farmer, "why as many as we can possibly muster, you may be sure; for I never in all my life had so much hay down together as I have just now. If we had but more hands, three days of this hot sun and lovely breeze would make it all safe for us. But the quicksilver is settling down this morning, I see, so we

can't expect this fine weather to last many days longer. Well, we must work hard while we have it, and hope for the best. Let me see, there will be seven of our own people, and those six new men I hired yesterday, and if you reckon nephew Walter, here, and myself to make one more between us, there will be fourteen altogether."

Now the farmer spoke very modestly of his own powers when he said this: for though "Nephew Walter" was a slight-made lad of about thirteen, James Trimmer himself was a man of such unusual proportions and strength, that he could easily do as much work as any two of his labourers.

"Fourteen, we shall be altogether, and I wish we were *forty*," continued the farmer; "but perhaps my good woman and the maids will come out and handle the forks by-and-by."

"Not we, indeed!" replied Mrs. Trimmer,

"till we have finished our own work, at any rate. How are the victuals for fourteen hungry people to be got ready, if we go a haymaking, I should like to know?"

"Then I shall be the only idle person on the premises," said I to myself; "perhaps the only thoroughly idle, useless being within ten miles of us. To be sure I am not very strong, nor used to hard work; but at haymaking-time anybody can be useful, and I could do as much as little Walter there, at any rate. Come. I will try to spend one day of my life usefully and industriously."

"So, telling Mr. Trimmer that he had made a mistake in his reckoning, and that he would have one more haymaker in his employ than he expected, I accompanied him into the field, where, under the tuition of my friend Walter, I soon learned to perform my part very much to my own satisfaction.

Here I must introduce my young friend more particularly than by merely saying that he was James Trimmer's nephew. His father, a poor hard-working curate, preaching two or three sermons a week, and with difficulty maintaining his family upon an income which did not amount to the yearly earnings of a skilful journeyman tailor or shoemaker, had died when little Walter was about two years old. His wife soon followed her husband, and as she had offended her own family by her imprudent choice, poor Walter was left without a friend or protector in the wide world, except his uncle and aunt Trimmer. Now this early bereavement, unfortunate in most instances, had proved a blessing to the little boy; for which is the most enviable condition, that of a very poor curate's son, or that of a thriving farmer's nephew and adopted child? It is true that as

the former he would have had more right to the title of *gentleman;* but give me well-fed and warm-clad respectability, rather than starving and half-ragged gentility. And I mean to show that Walter, though his working-clothes were of coarse texture, and his shoes were often adorned by half a pound weight of hob-nails, had nevertheless principles and feelings that would have done honour to any station in life. Neither was he so deficient in learning as boys of his class usually are; for his uncle, who had received some education himself, was too sensible of the advantages he had derived from it, to neglect his nephew in this respect. So the long winter evenings were spent by Walter very pleasantly and profitably, in reading and writing, and in learning the first rules of arithmetic.

But after a few years' instruction there

followed a consequence which the farmer had himself foreseen, and had predicted to his wife very soon after he had taken upon himself the office of tutor to his nephew. The intelligent child had imbibed all the learning the teacher had it in his power to impart, *and longed for more.*

At this crisis, when Mr. and Mrs. Trimmer were debating whether they could make up their minds to part with their nephew, and send him for a year or two to a school in the neighbouring town, I first became an inmate of their comfortable abode. Compelled by ill health to give up my profession, and to take refuge in the genial climate of our southern coast, I had spent several weeks in rambling about, seeking for a quiet resting-place, and finding none exactly suited to my wishes. One place was too public, another too lonely and out of the world, even for

such a lover of retirement as myself; and many situations, though agreeable in other respects, were far too expensive for my very slender income.

One afternoon, during my uncertain wanderings, as I was sitting on a stile, contemplating a glorious ocean-view, and inhaling with delight the perfumed sea-breeze that blew softly over the land, I was startled from my musings by a voice behind me, very civilly requesting permission to pass by. I stepped aside to comply, and then my acquaintance with little Walter Trimmer commenced.

There was something wonderfully engaging in the boy's manner and appearance. Though not absolutely handsome, the expression of his face combined so much intelligence with the greatest simplicity and innocence, that the absence of perfect beauty

and regularity of feature was forgotten. His was a face on which the finger of the Creator had written in characters not to be misunderstood, "Trust me, try me; I *cannot* deceive you."

As in our pilgrimage through this world of deceit and treachery, such a perfectly ingenuous countenance as I have attempted to describe does not often refresh our sight, I determined to make an acquaintance with its owner, and accordingly I entered into conversation with Walter, who soon became very sociable and communicative. He showed me, at the distance of about half-a-mile, the chimneys of his uncle's house, peeping up behind a forest of apple-trees, and as it lay nearly in my way to the little village where I lodged, I determined to accompany my new acquaintance there. I asked Walter if he thought his aunt would spare me a little milk.

"Yes, I am *sure* she will, sir," replied he; "and you can have it fresh and warm from the cow, for it is just about milking-time. Or, if you like it better, aunt will give you a glass of ale or of cider. Oh, such capital cider we make, sir! Uncle often says that ours is the very best cider in all Devonshire. Aunt always gives me a good large cup full with my supper: aunt is very kind to me, sir; oh, so kind! and I am sure she will be glad to give *you* any thing to eat or drink you like. Only I must tell you one thing; you must not do what some very fine grand ladies did a little while ago."

Here my little talkative friend paused, and looked rather confused; so I inquired what these fine grand ladies had been guilty of.

"Why, they came as you are going to do now, sir," replied Walter, "and asked for some milk; and aunt gave them some, of

course, and some bread and butter, and some honey, and what do you think they did, sir, when they were going away? Why they wanted *to pay for it!* I declare aunt looked downright angry. Her face was as red as fire with anger; and I never in all my life saw her so but once before, and that was when she caught our boy Joe tying a squib to the cat's tail. However, she managed to keep quiet till the ladies were outside of the door, and then she said, so loudly that I am pretty sure they heard her, 'When I keep a public-house I'll hang out a sign!'"

I promised Walter that I would not imitate the conduct of these offending ladies; and now, crossing a winding, narrow pond or moat, by a bridge formed by a prostrate willow-tree, we passed through a long avenue of magnificent hollyhocks, and entered the house. My conductor showed me into a

small, neatly-furnished parlour, and went to call his aunt. As they came along the passage, I could not help overhearing Walter's description of his new acquaintance. "He is so pale and thin, and walks *so* slowly!"

I beheld in Mrs. Trimmer the personification of neatness and good order. Her round, plump face was so radiant with benevolence and kindness, that I could easily believe it would become "as red as fire with anger," at the sight of Joe's naughty pyrotechnic experiment, or of any other act of inhumanity towards man or beast. Perhaps my sickly appearance and Walter's account of my weakness interested the good woman's compassionate feelings in my favour, for she received me with the most winning kindness, and with genuine rustic good breeding. Walter was immediately despatched into the field for a refreshing draught of new milk.

As some excuse for my intrusion, I asked Mrs. Trimmer if she knew any person in the neighbourhood who had comfortable lodgings to let. She replied that there were no *regular* lodging-houses in or near the village; but that she and her husband had been thinking of taking a lodger, if they could meet with one who would be content with humble accommodations and plain fare. As she said this, she looked doubtfully, first at the low ceiling and simple furniture of the little parlour, and then at myself. No doubt she came to the conclusion that the *man* and the *apartment* were not very unsuitable for each other, for she added:—"If you, sir, would like to try our lodgings for a few weeks and could put up with our plain farm-house victuals, I'm sure I would do my best to make you comfortable, and so would my good man, for that matter."

So I *did* try Mrs. Trimmer's lodgings for a month or two, and liked my quarters and my entertainers so well that I became a yearly, instead of a weekly boarder. As for "the plain farm-house victuals," I envy not the man who could not be content with the substantial, wholesome meals Mrs. Trimmer provided for her family. And to one who, like myself, had never before tasted any thing more genuine than London "sky-blue," an unlimited supply of the richest milk and cream was a delicious novelty; neither must I omit to praise the "best cider in all Devonshire," which well deserved the name of "*apple-wine*," as the good farmer delighted to call it.

Walter and I soon became fast friends; and the plan of sending him to a school was joyfully abandoned by his uncle and aunt, when I told them that it would be a pleasure

to me to devote an hour or two in the day to his instruction. Had I not in this manner been the means of altering my young friend's destination, I would not have obtruded so insignificant a personage as myself upon the reader's notice, for I had rather be Walter's historian than my own. Let us return to the hay-field

CHAPTER II.

THE scene of our labours was a large field on the side of a very gently-rising ground, close to the house. Here the whole of Mr. Trimmer's hay-making force was assembled; for the mowers had but just finished their part of the work, and the farmer was anxious that the very heavy crop of grass should be spread abroad to the sun and wind as soon as possible.

Among the additional haymakers hired the day before, I could not help noticing a man of the most repulsive and unearthly aspect imaginable. With prodigiously long legs and arms, he would have been as tall a man

as Mr. Trimmer, if nature or an accident had not crooked his spine, and shortened his body to about half its proper proportions. But how can I describe his countenance? This was so fearfully distorted, and the nose and mouth were thrust so much to one side, that his only remaining eye, which gleamed like a burning coal, really appeared to be placed nearly in the middle of his face.

"That's *Polyphemus*, sir!" whispered Walter to me, remembering the description of the King of the Cyclops, in one of my books, which he had lately been reading. I found, on inquiry, that this man had but lately appeared in the neighbourhood, and that very little was known about him, except that his name was Joe Brindle, and that he had several times given proof that his disposition was as savage as his appearance.

Some incendiary misdeeds of his were also talked about, and I was surprised that the farmer would employ such a man. "Why sir, I believe he's a bad fellow," said he: "but he is a capital hand for the work: only see how famously he tosses his fork about, with those long arms of his! I don't much like the man, but when labourers are scarce we must not look too closely at them. At haymaking-time we are glad to get anybody."

For more than two hours I continued using my fork very steadily, following "in the wake," as sailors say, of Walter and his uncle, for the sake of an occasional word of instruction or encouragement. But before noon I was compelled to give up: though very desirous of making a whole day's work of it, the unusual exertion, and the intense heat of the sun, entirely exhausted my small

measure of strength, and made me retreat to a shady corner at the upper end of the field, where, reposing on the grass, I contemplated the busy scene before me.

I do not believe that I slept, because between the undoubted reality of the scene and the visionary character of what followed, there was the most perfect connection, without a moment's forgetfulness. The fearful and fiery appearances that troubled my sight, were, no doubt, the delirious imaginings of a brain half roasted by an unusual exposure to the fierce heat of the sun. I am convinced that I was suffering from a slight "coup de soleil;" but it is not easy to understand why the events that really took place soon afterwards, should have been in some measure foreshown in this vision, or trance, or whatever the reader may please to call it.

I continued gazing at the busy group of haymakers, slowly moving, in two zigzag ranks, across the field. One body was headed by the stout farmer, followed by his nephew and his servants; and the other rank was composed of the six strangers, including "Polyphemus." For some time every thing went on very quietly and orderly. Presently Walter began to appear fidgetty and uneasy; and at last he said to Mr. Trimmer:

"Uncle! uncle James! I am *sure* it is so. I saw it then quite plainly; only look when he passes us again."

"Nonsense, lad! thou art dreaming, or if it *did* smoke a little, it was from the heat of this burning sun, I suppose: I am half on fire myself."

"But why should it smoke and crackle, when *he* treads upon it? Oh, frightful!

Look at his shoes uncle! Only look at the bottoms of his shoes, when he lifts his feet up."

"I say, master," said Parsons, the farmer's head man, coming up close to him, and speaking in a mysterious tone; "Master, I don't like that Brindle's way of making hay at all! Don't ye see how it *smokes*, when he kicks it about with his feet, in that strange fashion: depend upon it, there's something wrong about that fellow:—look at his shoes master!—look at those great iron heels on his shoes!"

"Ha, well, they *do* look as if they were rather hot, to be sure. But this sun dazzles my eyes so. Well, well, as I told Mr. Ernest this morning, when men are scarce we mustn't look at them too closely, for at these times we are glad of anybody. Come, my lads, keep moving."

Parsons fell back into his place, but appeared dissatisfied; and I determined, notwithstanding the farmer's advice, to *look very closely indeed* at Polyphemus and his extraordinary method of making hay. Walter and Parsons were right. The green grass certainly smoked and fizzed, under the long-legged monster's feet; and when he passed near me, I saw with horror that the large iron heels of his shoes were not merely red-hot, but absolutely glowing and sparkling with intensity of heat. Presently, a lock of hay, which, in his strange antics, he had kicked aloft into the air, actually took fire, and before it reached the ground was entirely consumed.

"Hallo! Brindle!" exclaimed the farmer, who now seemed convinced that mischief was in the wind; "I say, Brindle, let us have no more of that; do you hear?—I

can't afford to have my hay wasted in that way."

"I can't help it," replied he of the fiery heel, in a voice that sounded like the lower notes of an ill-played basoon. "'Tisn't *my* fault, I tell you. The foolish shoemaker *would* put upon these shoes iron heels that had been made by some newfangled machine or other. I told him that mischief would come of it, for all machines are inventions of Satan, and they *will* do their master's work in some way or other. No wonder these heels are hot, though they were made a twelvemonth ago! Confusion to the inventors of all machines and contrivances for taking the bread out of the poor man's mouth!"

"Well, that beats every thing!" said the farmer. "What does he say? Iron keep hot for a twelvemonth! Well, well, it may be

so, though it *does* seem odd, to be sure: we have got something to learn yet, nephew Walter; but we'll ask Mr. Ernest all about it, this evening. But as for those queer shoes of yours, Brindle, I can't have my hay burnt up, you know. So just run down to that pond, at the bottom of the field, and try if *water* won't cool those smoking heels; do ye hear?"

The man obeyed, muttering a fresh malediction upon all machines and their inventors, while the farmer and his men stood leaning on their forks, waiting to see what would take place upon the meeting of the two adverse elements, fire and water. The result was sufficiently extraordinary to have gratified any lover of the marvellous, who had witnessed it. When he reached the pond, or moat, which separated the field from the garden, the man-monster seated

himself astride on the willow-tree bridge, with his long legs hanging down on each side.

The instant his feet touched the water, there was heard a noise like the roaring of a thousand sky-rockets, and such a dense volume of steam rose up, that the machine-hater was almost entirely concealed by it. At times, however, when the breeze blew this curtain of vapour aside, he might be seen swinging his arms and legs about, after his own extraordinary manner, while his demoniac laugh mingled with the roar of the boiling cauldron beneath him. Words, also, of strange and fearful import were heard:

"Fire, fierce and inextinguishable! The torch of revenge to his roof, and the sharp knife to his throat, of the man who shall dare to cheat the labourer of his hire!"

"Impertinent fellow!" said Mr. Trimmer.

"What does he mean? But I wish we had never sent him down to the pond, for he'll soon make the water so hot that all the eels will be killed. Poor things! I fancy they are beginning to perspire in their holes already."

"And the water-cresses!" cried Walter; "the water-cresses that aunt is so fond of having with her supper! They will all be spoilt. Only think of that, uncle!"

"And worse than that, master," said Parsons; "ten times worse than that; all the pretty little tadpoles will be boiled to a jelly, and made into frog-broth, poor things!"

"Shameful!" exclaimed the farmer. "I can't bear that. I am a peaceable man, but I *will* protect the tadpoles! Their poor mothers, the frogs, laid their eggs in my pond, with the understanding that the water should

always be kept cool and comfortable for their children. 'Tis what they call a '*breach of confidence*,' nephew Walter, and whoever is guilty of that don't deserve the name of an Englishman. Follow me, my men, and we'll soon drive this fiery-footed fellow out of the parish."

So the whole company, with the indignant farmer at their head, rushed down to the moat with their hay-forks in their hands. Brindle was prepared for the attack. As the formidable body of pikemen approached, gathering up his long legs under him, with a tremendous spring he leaped far over the head of the foremost man, who had made an unsuccessful thrust at him with his fork, and away up the field the monster ran with the speed of a greyhound. And now the chase commenced in earnest. In hopes of surrounding the enemy, the farmer and his men

dispersed themselves over the field, shouting to each other, "Brindle with the fiery heel! After him! Down with him! Death to the incendiary!"

The monster's method of progression was singular. It was neither running, nor leaping, nor flying over the ground, but a fearful and supernatural *rolling!* Stretching out his long arms and legs, he became an animated wheel, of which his shortened body formed the nave; and, as it revolved with extreme rapidity, a rim was supplied by a bright band of fire and sparks proceeding from the glowing heels.

What chance had human pursuers of overtaking such a demon wheel as this? None whatever; and they soon wished that they had not disturbed him from his seat on the bridge, for the incendiary's evil intentions were now but too apparent. As the rolling

monster coursed rapidly up and down the field, he seemed to be trying to imitate the action of a haymaking machine, his arms and legs seizing the grass in his course, and throwing it aloft in the air. *Like* a haymaking machine, but with a *difference!* For instead of suffering the hay thus tossed up to fall quietly on the ground behind it, this fearful machine *set it in a blaze*, and its destructive course was marked by a long train of fire and smoke. Breathless with running, the farmer and his men ceased from the hopeless pursuit, and stood in a corner of the field, contemplating with dismay the progress of the incendiary.

"'Tis the best crop of hay I ever cut in my life," exclaimed the poor farmer; "and this villain won't leave us a single blade of it."

"And worse still, master," said Parsons;

"ten thousand times worse than that!—the pond is all dried up, and the tadpoles are left half dead on the mud. And as for the eels, I don't believe there's a lively one among them all. I asked one great creature, as big as my arm, who was lying with his head out of his hole, how he felt himself after his hot bath. Says the eel to me, 'Parsons, I am ruined!—I'm boiled, I declare! The cook that skins me won't have much trouble with the job. She needn't put any sand upon her hands! I can't move an inch out of my hole, for fear I should leave my skin behind me. If I don't sue that Brindle for damages at the next sessions, may I be broiled and eaten alive!'"

The incidents of my vision now became still more confused and extravagant. Walter declared that, if nobody else would stop the progress of the fiery wheel, he would

try what *he* could do. Placing himself in the monster's way, he was immediately dashed to the ground, and arose with a torrent of blood flowing from his temples.

"That's just what I wanted," said he; "there's nothing like blood for quenching fire. 'Tis better than an ocean of water."

Then I saw that he also became a wheel, spouting forth a crimson torrent instead of fire; and as he followed close in the track of the other, the train of flame and sparks was quenched, till at length the discomfited incendiary demon, finding he could do no more mischief, rolled himself out of the field, and I saw him no more. But in the reverberations of a terrible thunder-clap, which burst over-head at the instant he disappeared, I could distinguish the words,

"Confusion!—Out-witted by a powerless child!"

* * * * * * *

I found myself lying on the grass, surrounded by the farmer and several of his men. Walter was kneeling by my side.

"Don't drop the blood upon my face!" said I to the boy.

"Blood, Mr. Ernest! 'Tis water: we found you in a fainting-fit, and uncle said that bathing your face would be the best way to bring you round again."

"Where did you get the water from, Walter?"

"Out of the moat, sir. It is not very clean, to be sure, but it was the nearest I could find."

"Then Brindle has *not* dried up the water after all! And the tadpoles and the

eels, eh, Walter, are they all well and comfortable?"

The boy laughed, and one of the men whispered to his companions, "The gentleman has been making free with that cider-keg, I am thinking, and the liquor has been rather too strong for him."

"Come, sir," said the farmer, "take hold of my arm, and let us go into the house. The work and the heat have been too much for you. I never felt such a roasting sun in all my life. You must lie down on the bed for an hour or two, and you will soon be better."

I took Mr. Trimmer's advice, and after a sound sleep of some hours, I awoke with no remains of my sun-stroke but a slight headache. I said nothing about the strange spectral illusions of the hay-field; but when closely questioned by Walter on the subject,

I told him I had been in a kind of a trance. However, I assured my friends that I had not been "making free with the cider-keg."

CHAPTER III.

I MISSED the farmer at breakfast the next morning, and found, on inquiry, that he had mounted his horse soon after daybreak, and had galloped off, without saying whither he was bound, or upon what errand. He returned before we had finished our meal, and Mrs. Trimmer inquired if he had been to seek for more haymakers.

"Yes, I have, sure enough," replied he: "and I have found one, and hired him; and a famous good hand he is too."

"*One* haymaker, indeed! Well, to be sure, one is just better than none at all; but I was in hopes you would have brought back twenty."

"But the one I *have* hired will do the work of any twenty haymakers in the country; aye, and do it better than they would, into the bargain."

"The man is dreaming!" cried the dame.

"Uncle has been in a trance, like you were yesterday, Mr. Ernest," said Walter, slyly looking at me.

"Hold your tongues, wife and nephew, and I'll tell you all about it. As I lay awake last night, thinking how we should manage to get in our hay without more hands, all of a sudden it popped into my head that Squire Thornley had got a *haymaking machine*. Said I to myself, 'They are earlier down in that warm bottom than we are here, by a week or more; and I dare say the squire has got all his hay in by this time. I'll ride over to-morrow, and ask him to lend me the machine for a day or two,

your aunt round to our way of thinking. For my part, I am too busy eating to do any thing but listen to you. Now, wife, it is your turn: Walter says you use machines."

"*I* use a machine! no never. I think *you* must be in a trance now, Walter."

"Well, aunt, I am sure that *barrel-churn* of yours is a machine, and so are all churns. Only fancy how cross Sally, the dairy-maid, would be, if you were to tell her that she must never use a churn."

"But she couldn't make butter without some sort of a churn, Walter."

"I think she might, aunt. If she was to take a whisk, and beat the cream about for half a day, I am pretty sure the butter would come at last. But stop, she must not use a whisk, for that is a sort of a machine too. So the only thing she could do, would be to thrust those great red arms of hers into the

these new machines, whether for haymaking, or thrashing, or what not. My father and his father before him would never use anything of the kind, and they were the best farmers in all the county. Ah! Mr. Ernest, you may smile, but depend upon it, sir, these machines will be the ruin of the country, in spite of what that book you were talking about may say to the contrary."

Mrs. Trimmer alluded to a very clever little work, called "The Results of Machinery," which had been sent to me in a packet of other literary food, by a kind friend in London.

"Aunt will never agree with the man who wrote that book," said Walter: "and yet she uses machines every day of her life."

"That's right, Walter," said Mr. Trimmer. "That's a good boy: see if you can bring

and then a fig for these haymakers.' Well, I rode over to the squire's and found that he was in bed, and that he wouldn't be down for an hour or more. Thinks I to myself, 'There's no time to be lost. He is a kind-hearted gentleman, and one that won't take offence when none is intended, and he has seen enough of farming business himself to know what it is to be in trouble for want of hands. I'll venture to disturb him from his nap.' So I wrote a bit of a note, and got his man to take it up to him. Well, in a minute or two, down comes my note again, and on the back the good gentleman had written with a pencil, 'Yes, and welcome.' So that's the clever haymaker I have engaged, and in half-an-hour he will be here. Well, my good woman, what now? I think you don't look altogether pleased about it."

"No, I never *am* pleased when I hear of

cream, and work them about till she was tired. Ha! ha! I think butter would soon be half-a-crown a pound, if people were obliged to make it that way."

"Well, then, I suppose we *must* have a churn, that's all. But I never heard it said that butter was made by machinery before. However, churns have been used these hundreds of years, that's one comfort, and 'tis these new-fangled machines that I dislike."

"Capital! there's one point gained. Now, nephew Walter, now!" cried the farmer.

"Then, aunt, there is that patent cheese-press, that uncle bought at farmer Bright's sale, last winter. I am sure that is a machine, and quite a *new-fangled* one too. You must turn that out of the dairy, aunt, and press the cheeses with a board and some heavy stones laid upon it. But I suppose the author of 'The Results of Machinery,'

would say that the board and stones were machinery too. So then, the dairy-maids must *sit* upon the cheeses day and night, like so many brood-hens hatching their eggs, till they were pressed dry enough. What a number of dairy-maids you must have, aunt! and only fancy a row of about a dozen of them, all sitting on their eggs—on their cheeses, I mean!"

"What nonsense the boy is talking!"

"Then there is the winch and chain at the well, that's another machine, aunt; and the smoke-jack, and the chaff-cutter, and the ——"

"Walter," interrupted the farmer, "cut me one more slice of bacon, and then I shall do till dinner-time."

"I can't uncle," said the boy, with a roguish look at Mrs. Trimmer. "A *knife* is a sort of machine, and aunt will be angry

if I use one. Shall I tear off a piece of bacon with my fingers, aunt?"

"My patience!" cried the good dame, rising up from the table; "this boy is getting a great deal too learned for me. I must go and see after those lazy maids of mine."

"And I must go and see after my new haymaker," said the farmer: "*he* isn't lazy, at any rate."

In a short time this new haymaker arrived, and was immediately put to work in the field; and though I had no wish for another sun-stroke, with its accompanying fiery vision, I could not help going out for a short time, to witness its performance. To those who have never seen a haymaking machine, a short description may be necessary.

The principal part was a long barrel, or

roller, covered with iron spikes, and mounted on a low, strong carriage, running on two wheels, which were connected with the spiked roller by wheelwork. But it was so contrived that, when the wheels turned round, the roller revolved much faster than they did, and it was placed at such a height that the iron spikes almost touched the ground.

This clever haymaker did its work beautifully. The machine was drawn slowly over the field by horses, and as the roller revolved the spikes caught up the hay, throwing it aloft in a finely divided shower, so that every blade of grass was separated, and exposed to the drying influences. Walter, who had never seen a haymaking machine before, was in ecstasies. As he examined the hay deposited on the ground behind the machine, he exclaimed, "Look, uncle!

only look how beautifully it spreads it about! I *do* hope that aunt will come out by and by, and see it. Huzza! machinery for ever! But there is aunt, I declare, feeding the ducks in the moat; when she turns round this way again I'll wave my hat to her. Now she sees us! Ah, and she shakes her head too; she doesn't like machinery yet, uncle James."

And there were some others present who held the same opinions as Mrs. Trimmer. There was some low grumbling and angry looks among the newly-hired men; and a circumstance soon occurred which proved that there was at least one determined enemy to machinery in the field that day. For presently, those who were near the machine were alarmed by a loud crash, while at the same instant a hay-fork was tossed up into the air by the roller, and Walter narrowly

escaped being impaled by it, as it fell to the ground. Fortunately the machine was but little injured. Some of the spikes were bent out of their places, but the smith could easily set them to rights in the evening, and in the mean time the machine would perform its work very nearly as well as before.

"Master," said Parsons, in a whisper, to the farmer, "I say, master, that fork was put in the way on purpose. If it wasn't, I'll eat it for dinner, iron and all. I am *sure* 'twas hid under the hay on purpose; for I was walking just before the horses, and I must have seen it, if it had not been covered up. Take my word for it, master, that Brindle is the man that did it."

"Likely enough," replied the farmer: "Likely enough, Parsons; but we can't *prove* it, you know. However, I wish we had never hired him."

"Uncle," said Walter, who had been examining the handle of the fork, "just look here, uncle!"

"Well, lad, I see nothing there, but the marks of the teeth of the machine."

"It isn't those marks I mean, but just here, and here again, there are spots of blood, and they are hardly dry yet. The man that used this fork last has hurt his hand; and I think you may find him out that way, for nobody has touched it besides myself, since the machine threw it up. I have no cut on *my* hands, have I, uncle?"

"That will do the business for us, I declare! so call all the men together, Parsons, and make them stand in a row. Well done, nephew Walter! that was a lucky thought; we shall find the rogue out this way, I do believe."

When the men were all assembled, the farmer addressed them.

"Now, my men," said he, "I don't want to accuse any of you of playing this shabby trick, but somebody *must* have done it, you know. Now then, listen to me. If any man has a mind to confess that he put that fork under the hay, let him step forward and beg pardon; but all of you that declare you know nothing about it, hold up both your hands!"

"I was sure of it!—Thee art the man!"—cried Parsons, suddenly flying at Polyphemus, and grasping him by the throat. "Take hold of his arm, master! make him show his hand again. There! 'Tis all bloody, you see. Oh, thou villain!"

Notwithstanding the strong testimony of the bleeding hand, Brindle sulkily denied that he was the offender. And, after a little

consideration, Mr. Trimmer came to the conclusion, that if he were to take the man before the squire, besides losing much valuable time, he should find it difficult to *prove* that he laid the fork under the hay with an evil intention. Parsons and some of the men proposed a ducking in the moat, but the farmer would not allow it; so all the punishment Brindle received was instant dismissal, without his wages.

He departed, grumbling like an enraged bear, and one of the men declared he heard the words—"hear of me again before you die!"

"What dost say," exclaimed the indignant Parsons, "Hear of thee again!—Likely enough! For my part, I hope to hear of thee swinging on a gallows, before long. Master, we must look sharp, or he'll do us a mischief one of these days. I've heard

say that that Joe Brindle, or 'Polly Famous,' as master Walter calls him, has been *famous*, sure enough, for these sort of doings, before now."

CHAPTER IV.

In three days after the dismissal of Brindle, by the valuable assistance of the machine, and by the greatest exertions on the part of men and horses, Mr. Trimmer's hay was all secured, and deposited in the rick-yard, in the form of three prodigious haymows. Not four hours after the last load had been brought home, the rain, which had been threatening all day, began to descend, first, in a light, almost invisible mist, increasing by degrees to a heavy, downright deluge.

The farmer stood at the window, contemplating his haymows, safe under the shelter of the tarpaulins, and prophesying that

the wet weather would last for a week at least. I was surprised to observe that he was in an unusually grave and meditative mood. When I congratulated him on his good fortune, he said:

"Better than I deserve, sir! Far better than I deserve: for I am ashamed to say that I have grumbled a little sometimes when it has pleased God to send us such weather as this before the crops were secured. Mr. Ernest, I have been trying to think *how I should have felt, and what I should have said*, if this rain had come yesterday! Ah! I am not half so patient and grateful as my poor father was! *He* never complained of too much rain, or too much drought, 'for,' said he, 'what is bad for one crop may be good for another.' I remember once, when I was a boy, father had got his hay in that very field we have

been working in to-day, all beautifully made, without a drop of wet upon it, and they were just going to begin to carry it home, when all of a sudden, a storm came up over the water, down came the rain, five times harder than it does now, and in ten minutes every bit of hay was entirely soaked. Well, sir, father came into this very room, (I remember I was sitting by the fire at the time, for I was just out of the measles,) he came in smiling and cheerful, and as he took off his dripping wet coat, he said to me, 'Ah, Jemmy, my boy! this is a lovely rain for the turnips!'* That was five and thirty long years ago, Mr. Ernest, but I haven't forgotten it yet. Well, my good dame," continued the farmer to his wife, who just then entered the room; "well, what dost say to it now?"

* A fact.

"Say to what, I should like to know?"

"Why, to this change of weather, and to our good luck in getting every bit of our hay in just in time."

"Well, I say I am heartily glad of it, sure enough."

"But, aunt, this is one of '*the results of machinery*,'" said Walter.

"True enough, boy," replied his uncle, "for without the help of that machine, our hay, instead of being snug under shelter there, would be lying abroad, soaking and spoiling in this rain. Now, my good woman, confess. Machinery isn't such a bad thing as you thought, is it?"

"Why, if no more harm came of it than this haymaking machine has done just now, I wouldn't complain. But I have heard of poor people being thrown out of work and half starved by some of these new

schemes. *That's* the sort of machinery I don't like."

"Now, nephew Walter," said the farmer, "come, you shall go on with it, for I am getting out of my depth. But you have read the book through from beginning to end. Now then, what have ye got to say to that?"

"Why, aunt, the author of the book says that—but Mr. Ernest can explain it a thousand times better than I can."

I told Walter that I should much rather hear him go on with the argument himself, so he continued.

"He says that, whenever a machine is invented to do any sort of work quicker than it could be done by hand, it generally happens that a good many people who used to get their bread by working at that trade, lose their employment, and of course that seems a bad thing. But then this new

machine, suppose 'tis a machine for weaving cloth, makes it so much cheaper than it could be done by hand, that people can buy three or four times as much for their money as they did before. So there's more good than harm done, you see, aunt. Then, by and by, such a quantity of this cheap cloth, or whatever the thing may be, is used, that there are more people wanted to manage the machines than ever worked at that trade before they were invented. So nobody need complain."

As Walter paused in his harangue, I whispered to him a single word which started him off again directly.

"Thank you, sir! I had forgotten all about that. Aunt, how would you like that all the books in the world should be burnt; Bibles and all, and that nobody should be allowed to print any more?"

"Why, I should not like it at all, Walter. What is the boy talking about now?"

"Well, aunt, before the machine they call a *printing-press* was invented, every book was obliged to be written with a pen, and there were a great many people who got their living entirely by copying books; so you may be sure they were very dear at that time. But when the printing machine was invented, these copying people complained sadly, because they had nothing more to do, for the printed books were much neater than the written ones, and didn't cost half a quarter as much. So almost everybody that could read bought some books, and then they taught their children to read too, and more books were wanted for them. And though the poor copyers lost their employment at first, I dare say they soon learned to be printers, for so many books were

wanted that the printing-machines could find work for them all, and for a great many more people besides."

"Well, boy," replied Mrs. Trimmer, "I hope 'tis all for the best, but I can't argue with thee. If father was alive though, I think *he* would answer thee or the man that wrote that famous book either. *He* would soon drive you up into a corner, depend upon it.—But come, I want thee to stop up a rat-hole for me in the fowl-house, for the vermin got in last night and sucked half-a-dozen eggs."

"Uncle is going to buy me a *rat-catching machine*," said the boy, following his aunt, laughing; "and I am to have a penny a piece for all the rats I catch. But if our poor cats could speak, I dare say they would say that it was very unfair to do their work for them by machinery."

For several weeks after this discussion nothing worth recording took place at the farm, except that Walter's rat-catching machine, otherwise a common gin, was procured from the town, and soon gained a very agreeable addition of pocket-money for its owner. But at length a circumstance occurred which gave Walter a good deal of uneasiness. He generally set his gin in the barn at night, and paid his last visit to it just before he went to bed; but one morning, instead of seeing his usual pennyworth dead in its close embrace, he was shocked to find a mangled leg remaining in the gin, the poor animal to whom it had belonged having made its escape. Now my young friend had one good quality, which, I grieve to say, is very rare indeed with boys of his class. Walter Trimmer was exceedingly humane and kind-hearted. Therefore, when

he considered what suffering he had been the means of inflicting upon this poor rat, he determined never again to set his gin at night, and in the daytime only, when he could have an opportunity of visiting it frequently. This resolution proved that his humane feelings were powerful and unfeigned, for by adhering to it he would lose a great part both of his profits and amusement. For Walter, like other boys of his age, (and like many grown-up boys also,) took great delight in rat-catching, which he esteemed a very noble and interesting sport. To those who are not of his opinion, and who may think that too much has already been said on this subject, I must apologise, by reminding them that important events often arise from small and insignificant causes; and so it was in this instance. To preserve the regularity of the story, I shall relate the events that followed

m the order in which they occurred, not as they came to my knowledge.

One night, after Walter was in bed, he suddenly remembered he had omitted to pay his usual visit to his gin, before he retired to rest, and that it still remained set in one of the barns. What should he do? He could not sleep comfortably with the idea that, owing to his neglect, it was quite possible that an unfortunate rat might be caught, and be compelled to endure the pain of a broken leg till the morning. Then, on the other hand, it was a dismally wet, blowing night, and the barn was a considerable distance from the house. To some boys, the mere idea of going out alone in the dark would have had its terrors, but Walter had no superstitious fears, and he was constantly in the habit of wandering about the premises by himself at night.

For some time the boy endeavoured to silence the promptings of humanity, by thinking, that of all the rats he had ever caught there was only one that had not been put out of its pain instantly, and it was very improbable that another instance of the kind should occur just at this time. So he determined to think no more about it, but to lie quietly till the morning. But of all the enemies of comfortable sleep *an uneasy mind* is the most certain and unappeasable; and so poor Walter found it on this occasion. He *could* not sleep. Therefore, after vainly combating with the enemy till past midnight, he was obliged to yield at last: so putting on his clothes in the dark, he groped his way as quietly as possible down into the kitchen, and lighted the candle of a lantern at the remains of the wood-fire.

"Now, then, if I can but contrive to open

this door quietly!" said he to himself, as he carefully drew back the bolt; "if uncle and aunt don't hear me, I'll never tell them a word about it, for perhaps they would laugh at me for what I am doing. What a dismally dark night! I hope I shan't fall into the moat. But it doesn't rain now, that's one comfort."

Walter crossed the moat by a tolerably wide bridge of planks, which connected the garden with the farm-yard. As he passed over, he held down his lantern to ascertain if the heavy rains had raised the water much above its usual level; for if this were the case, he knew that he should have the pleasure in the morning of opening the floodgate, in the field at the further end of the moat, and of witnessing the beautiful rush of water. By means of this floodgate, the moat could be entirely emptied, if necessary.

"Why, the water is *lower* than common, instead of being *higher!*" said Walter to himself, as he kneeled upon the bridge, and held down his lantern as low as he could reach. "I can't see the water at all! Well, I declare, 'tis every drop of it run out, for there are the three great stones at the bottom that were too heavy to be got up when the mud was cleaned out last winter. How angry uncle will be! It must have been that tiresome boy, Joe, that opened the floodgate last night, to lower the water, and forgot to shut it again. He had no business to touch it at all, for he knows that is *my* job always. Now I must go into the field and shut it down again. 'Tis lucky I came out to-night. But I'll go and fetch the gin first."

When Walter reached the barn he was obliged to crawl on his hands and knees through a long, narrow passage, between sacks of

corn, over which some trusses of straw had been placed. At the further end of this cavern, as it may be called, the gin was set; for a drain ran close by, which was a favourite resort of the long-tailed game. Thinking it would be dangerous to take the lantern among such combustible materials, Walter had left it outside, on the floor of the barn; but he soon found the gin in the dark, by feeling about with a short stick, and ascertained that a rat was caught fast by the neck. Then he crawled backwards out of his narrow den, and when he raised himself on his feet, to his utter amazement, he was in total darkness!

"What can have happened to the lantern?" said he, feeling about for it with his hands. "I am sure the candle was not nearly burnt out. Perhaps I left the barn-door open, and the wind may have blown

it out, for I know one of the sides was broken."

Here the poor boy's cogitations were interrupted by a violent blow, which beat his hat down over his eyes; and before he could utter a cry, his throat was clasped by a pair of unseen hands, so tightly that the feeling of suffocation, joined to his terror, almost deprived him of his senses. By degrees the terrible hands relaxed a little, but tightened again instantly, when the trembling captive attempted to call for help; and then a low, growling voice, which once heard could never be mistaken, muttered in his ear:—

"Hold your tongue, boy, will you! If you make that noise again I'll twist your head off. What business have you got out here at this time of night, I should like to know? Now, listen to me. I haven't half finished the job I came about yet; and if you don't make a

noise and disturb the house, perhaps I mayn't think it worth while to hurt you; but if you *do* give me any more of your noise, I'll tie you hand and foot, and toss you into the middle of the little bonfire I shall light up presently. Now, come with me, and I'll show you some sport."

Poor Walter was then half led, half dragged out of the barn, into the rick-yard, into a narrow passage between two large haymows, where the ruffian's evil designs were soon made apparent. Holding the boy by the collar with one hand, with the other he opened the door of a dark lantern, and began to complete the arrangements which Walter's unexpected appearance had interrupted. He had already raised a large heap of fagots in the space between the haymows, and nothing remained to be done but to dispose some gunpowder and brimstone among

the straw, at the bottom of the pile, in a way that would ensure the rapid communication of the fire to every part of it. The villain seemed to take a pleasure in this part of his work, and muttered to himself, as he carefully arranged the materials:

"Now, farmer Trimmer, we shall soon see! So, so, this was the hay that machine helped to make. Very well! people say they have a right to use machines if they like; and *I* have a right to make a bonfire if I like; that's all. Ha! ha! I wonder who will be tired of the sport first! Well, boy, dost understand what these fagots are for?"

Walter understood it all perfectly. Naturally of a very courageous disposition, though, like many other bold spirits, mild and tractable in his behaviour to those he loved, the boy had recovered from his first terrible fright, and he watched the proceedings of

his ferocious companion with extraordinary calmness and self-possession. He saw what the villain's intentions were, and he determined to prevent him from carrying them into effect, if possible.

"Uncle has taken care of me," said he to himself, "ever since I was a baby. He never gave me a cross word in all his life. He and aunt have been as kind to me as if I was their own child, and nobody shall ever say that I stood by and saw their property burnt without trying to save it."

Then he said to the incendiary, who still held him fast by the collar, while he completed the arrangement of his combustibles;

"Brindle, if you will only go away quietly without doing any mischief, I promise I'll never tell anybody that I have seen you here to-night."

The boy's clear, childish voice contrasted

strangely with the husky, growling throat of Brindle, who replied:

"Ho! ho! my boy, you'll *promise*, will you? You are a pretty fellow! you'll promise one minute and tell a lie the next. I'm too cunning a bird to be caught with that sort of nonsense. Now, listen to me: I came fifty miles to do this job, *and I'll finish it* if I was *sure* you would not tell. There, I think that will do; I shall just put a light to that bit of touch-paper, and then you and I will go up to the top of the hill yonder, and enjoy the blaze. Ha! ha! they won't find much water in the pond to put it out with, I have taken care of that. But mind our agreement, young fellow! If you keep quiet, I'll let you go home again as soon as the mows are well lighted up; and then you may tell your uncle 'twas I did the job, and he may catch me if he

can. But if you offer to call out before I give leave—you understand me. D'ye see this little bit of a stick? One cry, and it shall be your last!"

The boy heard him in silence, and saw him light the touch-paper, or slowmatch, which appeared long enough to burn for eight or ten minutes. Walter judged that it would last about that time, for he had lately assisted Parsons in the delightful employment of blasting with gunpowder, some trunks of trees for firewood, and he remembered the length of the touchpaper they had used to fire the train, and the time it had burnt before the explosion took place.

"Now, then," said the incendiary, "'tis all safe: we may as well be off to the hill and enjoy the sport at our ease."

"D'ye think the mows will make a good blaze, Brindle?" inquired Walter, quietly.

"A good blaze! Ay, ay; better than ever you saw on Guy Fawkes's night. Come, I see thee art a sensible lad. 'Tis not *thy* fault that the mows are burnt, and so thee art determined to enjoy the sight quietly. Dost love a good bonfire, lad?"

"Yes, sometimes," replied Walter; "we had better go now, hadn't we?"

The ruffian, Brindle, though generally cunning and wary as an old fox, was deceived by the boy's quiet and fearless manner; and though he still held him fast, he followed his advice in taking, what Walter assured him was a nearer way, across the fields to the neighbouring hill-top, instead of going along the lane. It *was* a nearer way, but that was not Walter's motive for proposing it; for though they would not pass quite so near the house as if they had followed the lane, he knew that they should be on

that side in which were the windows of his uncle's, and of all the inhabited bedrooms, except his own.

When they were opposite that side of the house, Walter stopped his companion, and said to him in a whisper:

"Brindle, I almost wish now that you wouldn't burn the mows. I know they will make a fine blaze, but uncle has been kind to me, and the hay is worth a great deal of money. So if you will let me go back and take the fire away, I'll never tell anybody who put the fagots there, as long as I live. I never told a lie in my life, and I wouldn't tell a lie to you now, to save all the hay in the country from being burnt."

"Come on," said Brindle, grasping his prisoner's throat, for his suspicions were somewhat aroused. "Come on, directly, and hold your tongue, or I'll strangle you!"

"God be merciful to me, then!" said the boy. Then, with a stout pocket-knife which he had taken out and opened unperceived, he gashed the back of the villain's hand to the bone, and as the pain obliged him to relax his grasp, Walter shouted with all his strength, "Help! help! uncle James! Fire! Help!"

The next instant a heavy blow from the incendiary's bludgeon laid him bleeding and senseless on the ground.

CHAPTER V.

"WHAT noise was that?" said the farmer to his wife; "didst hear a noise, or was I dreaming about it?"

"I dare say thee wast, for I heard nothing. The cock crowing, likely enough."

"The farmer thought it very likely *was* the cock, and he was on the point of closing his sleepy eyes again, when a faint gleam of light shone across the window for an instant.

"Wife, there's a flash of lightning! We are going to have a thunder-storm."

"Oh, then, do get up and shut the shutters, or I shall be frightened to death."

Mr. Trimmer arose to comply with his dame's request; but before he closed the shutters he stood at the window for a little while, waiting for the next flash, that he might see in what quarter the storm was gathering.

"The night is as dark as pitch," said he, opening the window and putting his head out; "but it don't seem like a storm, and I can hear no thunder."

"Now, my good man, do shut the window, for we *shall* have a storm, I am sure. I can smell the lightning already."

"Well, I never could smell lightning, though I have heard other people say they could. But I declare, I *can* smell something now, though I've got a bad cold in my head. 'Tis like a brimstone match, exactly."

"Yes, that's the sort of smell. I have smelt it fifty times. There, now, do shut the

window, and the shutters too, as close as you can."

"*Silence!*" said the farmer, in a half whisper, but in a tone which the practised ears of Mrs. Trimmer understood at once as signifying that he was in earnest, and would be obeyed. After a few seconds, he added, as he began to dress himself in the utmost haste, "Don't be frightened, Mary, but there's mischief abroad! I heard the gate at the end of the Long patch fall to, as plainly as possible. I am sure of it, for I should know the sound of that gate among a thousand. Directly after I heard somebody running, as if for his life, over the new-laid stones in the lane. There's some villany stirring. Ah! there it is, sure enough. I see the light now! There's a fire somewhere behind the house; but, by the blessing of God, we shall be in time to put it out before it

has made much head. So, my good dame, don't be frightened, but get up and call everybody. —Villains, I'll be amongst ye in a minute!"

The stout farmer made such a fearful clatter, as he half ran, half jumped down the uncarpeted stairs, that everybody in the house was thoroughly aroused, long before the trembling Mrs. Trimmer could knock at their doors. I looked into Walter's room, as I passed, to learn the cause of the disturbance, for the poor woman was unable to give me much information on the subject; but she sat on the stairs sobbing and wringing her hands, and exclaiming,

"Ah! I told ye so! I told ye so! The *results of machinery*, indeed! here they are come upon us at last, for we shall all be murdered, or burnt alive! I told ye all, that something bad would come of it, and nobody would believe me!"

Finding that Walter was not in his room, I went down into the kitchen, and then, through the open door, the cause of the alarm was apparent. A column of dense smoke, illuminated by the fire underneath, was rising up among the mows.

I hastened into the yard, and found Mr. Trimmer and Parsons, with hayforks and rakes, throwing out the blazing straw and fagots from the narrow space where the pile was laid. For some minutes the issue was very doubtful. One of the mows had already kindled, and nothing but the greatest exertions, on the part of the farmer and his trusty foreman prevented the fire from spreading. However, this was at last accomplished, by tearing down the burning hay with rakes, till at length the danger was past, and all the flaming materials were collected together in a heap in an open part of the yard.

"Now God be praised for all his mercies!" exclaimed Mr. Trimmer, panting with heat and exertion. "Five minutes later, only five minutes later, and *nothing* could have saved the mows! And if the mows had burnt, the barns, and every thing else in the yard, would, most likely, have gone too, with the wind this way. Run in, Parsons, and tell your mistress 'tis all safe. I can't leave this heap till the flame is gone down a little, for the villains have taken care not to leave us a drop of water to put it out with."

I asked Mr. Trimmer if he knew where Walter was.

"In the house, I believe, sir," replied he, "with his aunt. I called out to him as I passed his door, and told him to stay and take care of her, for she is almost out of her senses with fright. But did ye ever see anybody in such a mess as I am, Mr. Ernest."

I now, for the first time, observed that he was plastered with black mud from head to foot. He said that, as he crossed the bridge he had plunged a milk-pail down hastily, intending to bring it up full of water: but not meeting with the resistance he had expected, he lost his balance, and fell over into the muddy bed of the moat: and with this most convincing proof that the water had been drawn off, the poor farmer first became aware of the sly trick that had been played him.

Scarcely had we begun to recover a little from our fright, when we were thrown into a fresh consternation, by finding that Walter had not been seen since the alarm of fire was first given. When every part of the premises had been searched without success, and poor Mrs. Trimmer and her maids were uttering lamentable cries of distress, the farmer beckoned me aside.

"I needn't ask what you think of this terrible business, sir," said he; "I can see it all in your face, plainly enough. I remember now that I found the kitchen door unbolted. The poor boy must have run out into the yard, before any of us, and the villains have murdered him! Oh! if it had pleased God that every stick and straw belonging to me had been burnt to ashes, rather than that boy should have come to harm, I should have been a happy man! I know I must not complain, *but I loved Walter!* we *all* loved him; nobody could *help* loving him! Now I must ride off to the town, to give information to the magistrates; though what *they* can do, I'm sure I don't know."

I went with Mr. Trimmer into the stable, to hold the lantern for him while he saddled his horse, for Parsons had been despatched

with the bad tidings to the nearest neighbour. The farmer was already in the saddle, when a piercing shriek of distress reached our ears, from the house.

"They have found him," said he, hastily dismounting from his horse. "They have found the boy, *and he is dead!*"

As we entered the kitchen, Parsons was endeavouring to comfort his mistress. "He's *not* dead, missis, I am sure; though I'm afraid he's hurt badly enough; but he isn't dead, for he keeps on groaning and moaning; and that's how 'twas I found him as I went across the fields. I didn't like to take him up in my arms, for fear I should hurt him, for perhaps some of his poor bones are broken; but if master likes, we two can carry him easily in this great arm-chair."

When poor Walter was brought into the house, I felt convinced that the terrible wound

he had received on his head would prove fatal in a few hours; for he was perfectly insensible, and, though he still breathed, it was in a heavy, laborious manner, and with a sound resembling snoring; a fearful token that the brain was injured. Mr. Trimmer galloped off for a surgeon, who, when he came, either could not or *would* not give us any consolation; for he was one of those brutal practitioners who disgrace their profession, by their rude and ungentlemanly behaviour, and who seem to think that, because a late celebrated surgeon (the letters of whose name most fortunately can be transposed into "*Johnny the Bear*") was both *surly* and *skilful*, therefore it is only necessary for them to ape his rough, uncivil manners, to make their patients believe that they possess his talents also. However, this bear, though he would not answer any questions, appeared to take great pains

in examining and dressing the poor boy's wound; and when that operation was finished, he condescended to swallow a very potent draught of brandy and water. Thinking that this might have the effect of molifying his surly temper a little, Mrs. Trimmer ventured to inquire if he thought the boy would recover.

"Recover!" said he, "what in the name of nonsense does the woman mean by asking such a stupid question as that? How can I tell whether the boy will recover or not? D'ye think that his skull is made of *glass*, that I can look into his head and see what's the matter with the brain. The boy has had a terrible blow, I tell you, and *nobody* can say what the consequences may be. Now, my good man, is my horse ready?"

It was more than three weeks before time solved the question, which the surly doctor

could not answer. By careful nursing, and, to give the bear his due, by very skilful surgical treatment, Walter *did* recover, though it was many months before he was restored to his former health and strength. He was incapable of answering any question for several days after the night of the fire, therefore Brindle had time to escape to a great distance, before it was known that he was the culprit, though his conduct in the hayfield made us strongly suspect that he was concerned in the outrage. But the man's extraordinary malformation of face and body proved his ruin. Having some little talent in drawing likenesses, I made from memory a sketch of the incendiary, which was printed at the head of the handbills offering a reward for his apprehension; and though it certainly did not merit the praise bestowed upon it by Walter, who called it "*a most beautiful* likeness

of Polyphemus," it proved sufficiently correct for the purpose. You might have seen an outline of Brindle's long, straggling limbs and shortened body, pasted on the walls of almost every town and village in the south of England. "'Twill find him out!" said the farmer. "We shall catch him, sooner or later, if he is above ground."

It did find him out, though he was *not above ground;* for, after remaining concealed for more than six months, Brindle was at length apprehended, many fathoms beneath the surface, working in a mine in Cornwall. At his trial, Walter was the principal evidence against him; but his muttered threat of vengeance in the hayfield was not forgotten. The man had found the means of engaging the services of a lawyer, who did his best for his client, and strove, by a bullying cross-examination, to weaken Walter's testimony.

As easily might he have overturned a church, by pushing against it with his shoulder. Confident in truth and innocence, the boy remained firm and undaunted, and the most vexatious and intricate questionings of his adversary could not beguile him into saying a single word *more than the truth;* consequently he was in no danger of contradicting himself in his answers. I believe the jury had almost decided upon their verdict before the trial was half over, and Brindle was condemned to pass the remainder of his days in banishment.

As I am writing the last pages of this little history, the delicious fragrance of new-made hay, from the adjoining meadow, breathes in through the open window, and reminds me that a year has passed away since the gathering in of the last crop, which, but for Walter's courage and letermination, would have

been consumed by the revengeful incendiary's torch. Occasionally, as it approaches the house, I can hear the whirring noise of the haymaking machine; for the farmer, not deterred by the disasters of last year, is again availing himself of the services of this useful invention. He is even seriously contemplating the erection of a thrashing-machine.

"All the incendiary villains in the world," he says, "shall not frighten me from doing a thing, when I know that it is right and proper to be done. However, we needn't put ourselves into a fidget about it, for we have heard nothing of these nightly fires for some time, so let us hope that the people are getting wiser or better."

Brindle's knock-down argument, although it very nearly deprived Walter of his life, has not altered his opinions in the least. I believe he knows a great part of "The Results

of Machinery" by heart; and his uncle often appeals to nephew Walter, when he finds himself likely to be overcome in his discussions with his brother farmers on the subject.

As for my kind hostess, she still calls herself a determined enemy to the use of machinery; though, with great good humour, she soon becomes partially reconciled to any improvements of that nature which her husband introduces. The subject is still frequently discussed by the members of the Trimmer family; but if differences of opinion were always maintained with their moderation and good temper, the world we live in would be a quiet resting-place indeed.

MARGARET SEATON'S VICTORY.

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CHAPTER I.

THE RESCUE.

A STORM! a very terrible storm indeed. A shipwreck! A noble vessel, after a prosperous voyage from the East, with a valuable lading, and a still more precious freightage of three-score human beings—a ship, upon whose construction the most skilful builder had spared no pains nor expense, to ensure speed and safety, is cast upon the shores of her native island; and no earthly power can save from present destruction, this, the most magnificent of the works of man's hands. The instant the ill-fated ship touches the rocks

the shrouds snap like packthread, and the lofty masts fall over the side, carrying with them yards, and sails, and rigging. And now the terrible power of the waves is manifested. The hull is lifted up on their crests, and dashed again upon the rocks with irresistible violence—torrents of water pour over the decks, sweeping away men, and boats, and heavy iron guns. Another lift and fall on the rocks, and the strong oaken timbers and planks are rent asunder, the deck is torn up, and in a very short time nothing but disjointed fragments remain of the noble ship, "The Margaret Seaton, of London."

Alas for the crew and passengers! All lost save one; and that one, the weakest and most helpless being in the ship, escaped to land almost by a miracle. For when the hardy sailor and practised swimmer appeared

to have no chance of prolonging his existence for many minutes, in the fearful surf that broke upon the shore, the mysterious interference of Providence was clearly shown in the preservation of this only survivor, a poor little helpless child, not five years of age.

And this was the manner of its preservation. When the ship struck, many of the crew endeavoured to save themselves by clinging to planks and loose spars, and some of the passengers, who were provided with life-preservers, threw themselves overboard, trusting to reach the shore by these means. Vain hope! The planks and life-preservers indeed kept the unfortunate creatures from sinking, but their existence was only prolonged for a few minutes, till they reached the rocky shore, upon which they were cast with violence, and miserably perished.

It was about mid-day when the catastrophe happened, and as the ship had been seen making signals of distress for some time before she struck, many of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood were assembled on the shore, though there appeared but little chance of rendering any assistance; for not only was this part of the coast so rocky that no boats were kept for several miles, but even if there had been boats, and expert sailors to manage them, it would have been impossible to have reached the wreck against that terrible gale and sea. So all that the spectators could do was to station themselves, with ropes in their hands, in the most convenient places they could find, in the hopes of rescuing any drowning wretch whom the waves might cast within reach.

It chanced that two young farmers, who were brothers, (there were no seamen or

fishermen on that part of the coast,) had placed themselves, one on each side of a small creek or deep fissure in the rocks, at the mouth of which was a low, flat rock, and over this obstruction the sea would occasionally break furiously, filling the little bay within. After one of these violent eruptions, which took place at pretty regular intervals of a minute or more between each, the young men perceived, struggling in the foaming water of the creek, a man, supported by a short, thick piece of bamboo-cane, fastened to his shoulders, and holding in his arms a very young and apparently lifeless child. Both were nearly naked, for clothes would have been no protection, but a great incumbrance to them, during their perilous voyage. Of course not a moment was lost in attempting their rescue, and a rope was skilfully thrown, the end of which fell over the man's

shoulders. But instead of immediately seizing it, appearing more anxious for the child's safety than for his own, he suffered a few seconds to elapse while he raised his precious burden higher out of the water, and, alas! this short delay was fatal; for at this juncture, a giant wave overtopped the rock at the entrance of the little basin, the almost rescued swimmer was carried out of reach of the rope, and for some time was invisible to the young men, who narrowly escaped being drowned, or dashed to pieces themselves, in the watery turmoil that ensued.

When this had a little subsided, the object of their eager search was again discovered, near the upper end of the creek, holding up the child, which he still retained, and exclaiming, "Save her! save my child, for mercy's sake!"

Again the rope was cast over him; but now

it was evident that he had been so much injured by beating against the rocks, as he was washed up the creek, that he had no power to save himself. Blood was flowing from his head, and one arm appeared quite useless, but with the other he still endeavoured to keep his child above water. His lips moved, but he had no longer strength to utter a sound, and he cast a look of most earnest entreaty upon the young men. The mute appeal was successful; and though but an indifferent swimmer, James Winter, the elder, fastened a rope round his middle, and giving the other end to his brother he boldly leaped into the water. He reached the father and child, and all three were drawn to the shore, and landed upon the rocks, just in time to escape the fury of another fearful deluge, which burst into the little basin, and would probably have been the destruction of

the whole party, had they been exposed to its violence.

But how were the feeling hearts of the brothers grieved, when they perceived the dreadful condition of the unfortunate man they had rescued. Not only was his arm terribly shattered, but he had sustained a very severe injury in the side, so deep and extensive that it required no surgical knowledge to convince the Winters that human skill could not prolong his life for many minutes. In fact, he was already dying, and a slight change of position, occasioned by his head and shoulders being gently raised proved immediately fatal. Life had fled past recall.

"It is all over with him!" exclaimed James. "May Heaven have mercy upon his soul! Get some help, Joe, and carry the body further up, for the tide is coming in

amain. We can do nothing more for *him;* and as for this poor little innocent, I'm afraid she is gone too. But who can tell? I heard Dr. Forrester say the other day, that people may be brought round again long after they seem stone dead. Why she hasn't got a scratch, or a bruise upon her body! By God's mercy her father's arms have protected her, though it *does* seem almost a miracle, to be sure. She must be one of Heaven's pet lambs, as mother says; and so you may depend upon it, Joe, her life is in her yet. Give me your jacket, it is dryer than mine; I'll wrap her up in it, and carry her at once to Dr. Forrester's: his house is nearer than ours by a good bit, and if anybody can bring her life back again *he* can."

"Yes, to be sure," replied Joe, "he *can* if he *likes*; but now I think of it, you

won't be able to see him. He is in one of his *sullen fits*. Thinking that we might want his help, I called as I came down, to tell him what was going on, and old Mrs. Walters said she didn't dare to go into his room, for he had been in a fine way ever since yesterday, when some letters were brought to him. Better take the child up to mother, and see what she can do for it."

"No—I'll go to the doctor's. Nothing but his clever ways can save it. I shall be haunted with that poor fellow's dying look all my days, if I don't do my best for his child. I'll go to Dr. Forrester, Joe, and I *will* see him. If Mrs. Walters don't choose to speak to him, I'll kick his door open. Half-crazy as he is, his heart is in the right place, as he showed the other day about Simpson's child. Come, my pretty dear, Heaven send thee a better nurse than I am!"

So saying, the benevolent young man carefully covered up the child, and hastened to Dr. Forrester's house, which was situated at about a quarter of a mile from the water's side.

CHAPTER II.

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

Who was this half-crazy Dr. Forrester?—An oddity, an eccentric being about whom all the gossips in the neighbourhood were completely puzzled, in their attempts to decide upon his character.

Just twelve months before our tale begins, he had come to the village in a post-chaise, from the county-town, distant nearly twenty miles, and for a few days had taken up his quarters at the little inn. Some weeks before his arrival, the sudden death of the proprietor, an old major in the army, had left vacant a

pretty little cottage, comfortably furnished, and exactly in a condition, as the advertisement, with a very unusual regard for truth, described it, "to be entered upon immediately." Even the old housekeeper and the cook of the late major remained in the house, seeming to consider themselves as much entitled to the name of fixtures as the doors and window-shutters, and truly these most respectable-looking old ladies did not appear to be the least desirable part of the establishment.

Whether this consideration influenced Dr. Forrester in his decision I cannot say; but he looked at the house, asked a few questions of Mrs. Walters, and immediately went back to the town. Next day he returned with the attorney, who had the charge of the property, and formally took possession of "The Last Halt," as the poor old soldier

had whimsically named his cottage; and such it had proved to him, after a very short enjoyment of ease and retirement. The two domestics were included in the transfer of the property, Dr. Forrester, unsolicited, giving them additional wages; for it was soon discovered by every person who had rendered him the smallest service, that whatever his character might prove to be, *stinginess* was not one of his faults. It was equally certain that whatever misfortunes had fallen to his lot, *poverty* was not among them. Alas! it soon appeared that poverty would have been a light affliction, compared to the heavy burden which oppressed him; for his whole manner and appearance testified that some terrible remembrance preyed upon his spirit, and threatened, by its consuming fire, to destroy both mind and body. Hidden sorrow had produced the usual melancholy effects

upon a fine figure and a very noble countenance, both of which were wasted, and, I might almost say, appeared scorched, by its influence; and though the mind had not suffered in an equal degree, there were times when reason and insanity held nearly equal shares in the government of his actions.

At such times the unfortunate young man would shut himself up in his room for several days together, neither eating nor drinking; and when the housekeeper would knock at his door, and timidly inquire if he wanted any thing, a savage "Begone, woman! don't torture me with your nonsense," was the mildest reply she would receive. So the two old women, though terribly frightened at first, became accustomed to these fits after a little while, and wisely left their master undisturbed, saying to each other,

"His evil spirit has him now; we must wait till it pleases Heaven to drive it away."

In the intervals between these overwhelming visitations, Forrester, though almost always moody and wayward in his temper, would employ part of his time most usefully, in visiting the sick poor in the neighbourhood; and his assistance in this way was the more valuable, as the parish doctor lived five miles off, and was both inattentive to his duties and sadly deficient in skill. Our melancholy friend's first patient was a poor man, in whose cottage he had taken refuge from a shower. He was confined to his bed by ague, and his visitor naturally inquired what medicines he was taking. His wife showed him a bottle containing a draught, and said that the parish doctor had sent it. "Blockhead!" exclaimed Forrester, when he had tasted the medicine; "throw that trash

away, and send up to my house in the morning; your husband shall be able to work in six days.

The man recovered within that time, and the fame of "the crazy doctor," which appellation he soon obtained, was spread abroad, so that many others applied for, and received relief for divers maladies. Now as Dr. Forrester really possessed unusual skill, both as a physician and surgeon, and as no practitioner of even moderate abilities had resided in the neighbourhood for some years, his cures seemed nearly miraculous in the eyes of the simple inhabitants, who almost believed that he kept the keys of life and death in the little room which contained his medicines and instruments.

But notwithstanding his wonderful cures, this strange young man was much more feared than loved, for his manner was almost

invariably distant, and even surly, especially when he fancied that his assistance had been asked when there was little or no occasion for it. A still worse offence was the unfortunate offer of a *fee* from the wife of a respectable farmer, who had benefited by his advice. The experiment was never repeated, for the terrified woman declared that she was convinced it was her sex alone that saved her from a beating.

There had, however, been one or two occasions when Forrester had gained somewhat upon the affections of his poor patients, by his great attention, and almost kindness, in cases of severe and dangerous illness; and an instance of this kind had occurred a short time before the shipwreck of the "Margaret Seaton," when a little boy, named Simpson, had met with a terrible injury, by falling down over the cliffs, while searching for sea-birds'

eggs. Forrester, who was in an unusually sane mood just then, was so much interested in the case, that he sat up with the poor child two nights, and supplied him with every necessary, till he recovered. It was his kindness to this child that had convinced James Winter that the heart of "the crazy doctor" was in the right place.

CHAPTER III.

THE REVIVAL.

ENOUGH has now been said to show the character of the person worthy James Winter had to encounter, when, breathless with running, he knocked at the back door of "The Last Halt," fully determined to see and obtain the assistance of its master, though he knew that his dark hour was upon him. But James felt that he was engaged in a good cause; moreover, he fancied that he was somewhat of a favourite with the doctor, who had certainly treated him with more civility than he was accustomed to show to his neighbours. Winter found Mrs. Walters quite terrified,

as his brother Joe had said, at the thoughts of disturbing her master at such a time; but the young man's earnest entreaties, joined to her own compassionate feelings for the poor little innocent he held in his arms, at length induced the good lady to knock at the parlour-door, James standing by her side, at her own desire, to keep up her courage.

No notice was taken of the first timid knocking, which was perhaps unheard; but a much more decided application of James's knuckles brought a furious "Who's there? Who dares disturb me now?"

It was some time before the poor housekeeper could reply, "I beg pardon, sir, I'm sure; but indeed you are very badly wanted. Here's young Mr. Winter has brought you a dead baby, and wants you to ——"

"Silence, woman!" thundered the recluse, "another word and you quit my service for ever. Begone! I say, instantly."

The housekeeper's small stock of courage not enabling her to proceed any further in the attempt, James, knowing that every moment was precious, now thought it quite time for him to put in a word, and he endeavoured to open the door, saying, "Doctor! Doctor Forrester! 'tis a matter of the greatest consequence. I *must* see you, sir! For the love of Heaven open the door and give us your help."

Here James, in his impatience, gave a very moderate push; the weak lock yielded unexpectedly, and he staggered forward with his burden into the presence of the astonished Forrester. Now it is well known to those who have the care of insane persons, that nothing controls their violence so ef-

fectually as a determined and fearless manner; and though our unhappy doctor was not absolutely insane, the young farmer's sudden intrusion and resolute countenance had the effect of calming his irritation, instead of increasing it, as would certainly have been the case had his mind been perfectly free from disease. Forrester addressed his unceremonious visiter in a subdued but agitated tone;—

"Winter, you are a rude fellow! I am busy now. I am ill—very ill. Call to-morrow, and I will do what I can for you.—There, good bye, leave me now, I beseech you."

"No, sir," replied Winter; "there isn't a minute to be lost. Look here!" added he, uncovering the child; "this looks like a dead body, but the life is in it, I am pretty sure, and *you* can preserve it if

you choose to try.—Refuse your assistance, and this child's blood will be upon your hands."

At these words Forrester fell back upon a sofa, and gasped for breath, like one who had received a deadly thrust, while his features were so terribly convulsed that Winter thought he was dying. When he recovered his speech, apparently quite unconscious of his visitor's presence, he exclaimed in a voice of agony and terror: "Blood! where? What! a second time? Blood upon my hands! Will nothing wash out the stain? Oh! God be merciful!"

While poor Winter stood aghast at the extraordinary effect his words had produced, thinking that he really had a madman to deal with, Dr. Forrester became gradually more composed, and when James again ventured to urge his request, he suddenly started

up, and took the child into his arms to examine it.

"My good fellow," said he, "what do you want? I cannot bring a corpse to life; and this poor little thing seems stone dead, and—no, it is *not* quite cold! I *will* do my utmost to save its life. Here, Mrs. Walters! bring the softest blanket you can find. Get a quantity of soft flannel besides, and put them all by the kitchen fire. Tell Betty to have plenty of hot water ready. Quick, quick, Mrs. Walters! don't stand there staring at me. Winter, take the child into the kitchen: if it please Almighty God she shall breathe again."

Forrester's energies were now thoroughly aroused, and all the usual means for cherishing the doubtful spark of existence into a flame were vigorously used by himself and the two old women, the young farmer watch-

ing their operations with an interest as intense as if his future happiness depended upon the issue.

But when these measures had been persisted in for more than an hour, without any appearance of success, Winter and the old women began to give up all hopes, and whispered to each other, "'Tis of no use! her spirit has been in heaven long ago." Even Forrester became anxious and fidgety; when suddenly recollecting himself, he exclaimed, "How foolish not to have thought of that before! Winter, come with me."

And now Betty's tongue, before awed into silence by the presence of her master, began to vibrate freely again.

"Ah! Mrs. Walters!" said she, "master's mortal after all. He can't do every thing, you see, and I don't know that I shan't like him all the better for it. Now, if it had been

such a poor old woman as *me*, I fancy master wouldn't have taken all this trouble to have brought *me* about again, if I had been under water a fortnight or more. Ah! if he had only taken my advice, and instead of all this rubbing and scrubbing, and puffing and blowing, had given the child a ——"

Betty was prevented from finishing her description of her peculiar process for restoring suspended animation by the return of Forrester and James from the surgery, carrying on a table a small galvanic apparatus, the strange form of which, joined to the unpleasant smell of the hydrogen gas which it evolved, caused the eyes and mouths of the women to dilate with astonishment.

"Out of the way, Betty," said the doctor; and as the poor old cook did not obey fast enough to please her impatient master, he

touched her elbows, whether intentionally or not was never known, with the two wires of the apparatus. A convulsive leap and a yell of terror proved that the arrangement was perfect, and Betty, quite unconscious of the cause of her strange feelings, threw herself into a chair, crying, "Oh the paralytics! I've had a fit, sure enough. I am in a fit now; but nobody cares for me."

Taking no notice of this new patient, Forrester now hastened to try the efficacy of galvanism on the child. The first application caused such a fearful convulsion of the limbs that the terrified spectators could not refrain from imitating the action, appearing as if they had received a share of the shock themselves. But Forrester remained perfectly calm, knowing that violent motion may be thus produced in a body when life has long been

extinct. And now a different direction of the galvanic fluid brought the *lungs* under its exciting influence. Breathing, at first weak and irregular, now commenced, and soon gained strength and steadiness. An uncertain fluttering, first over the heart, then at the wrist, began to be perceptible to the practised and sensitive touch of the doctor. Soon the whole body was strangely affected by a shuddering motion. Then, oh sight of joy! the eyes slowly opened, and though dim and rayless, and closed again immediately, they gave certain proof that the child's spirit still remained the tenant of her body. I need not describe the methods that were used to ensure its remaining in the abode it had so nearly quitted for ever. It is enough to say, that in another hour, the little girl, though still very weak and ill, was sufficiently recovered to be able to swallow some warm

milk, and soon after this, she fell into a sound sleep in the temporary bed which Forrester had ordered to be prepared for her in the kitchen, as being the warmest room in the house.

Which of the two felt the greatest joy at this resuscitation, Forrester or Winter, it is difficult to say. Both were well rewarded for their exertions, but they expressed their sensations very differently.

James capered about the kitchen, entreating that one of the old women would dance with him, for he declared that he must either dance or die. In fact, he was almost insane with joy. Still I think that Forrester's happiness must have been greater, for when the little girl first opened her languid blue eyes, a faint smile for a moment gleamed across his pallid face, which had not been gladdened by such an expression for many months.

The particulars of the preceding account of a recovery from apparent death by means of galvanism were related to me by James Winter himself. But I have heard that Betty gave rather a different version of the story, a few days afterwards, to a party of her gossips, at a farm-house in the neighbourhood.

"They were something like Chaney pig-troughs," said she; "and the stuff that was in them smelt like pig's-wash too, only a hundred times worse. Then master took a couple of long, sharp-pointed skewers, and ran them right through the child's body! 'Tis true, I tell you, for I myself saw the ends come quite through; and sure enough she'll carry the marks of them to her grave with her. And so the smell of the stuff and the pain of the skewers made the poor dear child sneeze and jump. Yes, I believe

she *did* jump, indeed! and we *all* jumped; and that's how it was, you see, that master brought her to life again."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PLOT.

THE morning after the shipwreck, when young Winter called at Dr. Forrester's he was delighted to find that the little girl was going on as favourably as could be wished, and that a few days' careful nursing would probably completely restore her to health and strength. The exertions of yesterday, and the happy result of his skill, had produced such a favourable effect upon Forrester's mind, that his two domestics agreed in the opinion that, if he could be provided with a half-drowned child to operate upon every day, he would soon forget his miseries, and become like other

people. Though still wild and abstracted in his manner, Winter found him more affable and cheerful than he expected; and he made many inquiries about the shipwreck, and seemed much interested in the account of the child's wonderful escape. Now it was very unusual for Forrester to address a question or an observation to any person, unless absolutely necessary, and the animation he showed on this subject was the more remarkable.

Winter informed him that the child he had saved was the only survivor from the wreck. Many bodies, most of them dreadfully mangled, had been washed up, and much valuable property had been recovered and placed in a large barn, till the owners of the ship should appear; for the people on this part of the coast had never been known to exhibit any *wrecking* propensities.

The name of the ship had been discovered, from part of a stern of a boat which had been thrown on shore, with "Margaret Seaton" painted on it; but nothing had been found, either on the dead bodies or among the recovered cargo, by which the names of any of the passengers could be known. But the nature of the goods which had been saved proved that the ship was from the East Indies, and her name being ascertained, there would be no difficulty in finding the owners.

Having been absent from home for several days at a distant fair, the kind-hearted young Winter, at his next visit, was not surprised to find the little girl perfectly restored to health, and radiant with childish beauty; but he *was* surprised to see where she had snugly established herself—in the lap of the poor, half-insane Forrester; and from this

situation it was not very easy to remove her when he was present. He had relapsed into his usual abstracted, melancholy mood, and was contemplating the child's lovely face with an expression in which compassion was singularly mingled with an air of surprise at her perfect freedom and untiring volubility. Though her face and complexion showed that she was of European parentage, the little creature was merrily chattering away in some foreign giberish, probably Hindostanee, which she had learned from her Indian attendants, while her knowledge of English was so imperfect, and it was so difficult to induce her to use this language at all, that very little information could be obtained from her, except that her name was "Peggy." She seemed much surprised at her protector's silence and grave demeanor, and now and then gave his face

a playful slap with her hand, as if to insist upon her right to a portion of his attention. When this happened, it was amusing to observe how he would draw back, as if, half offended at her familiarity, he intended to set the child upon the floor; but this was not to be done without absolute force, for a wonderful instinct seemed to have taught her to cling with affection to him who had conferred upon her a second life. So Forrester bent his head down over her again, as if he hoped to find consolation and happiness by gazing intently into her pure blue eyes.

"What do you mean to call her, sir?" at length said Winter. "I mean, till somebody shall be found to claim her, which seems not very likely from the account received from London."

"What do *I* mean to call her, James?"

replied the doctor, starting as from a trance; "'tis no concern of mine. *You* saved her from the waves, and now she is recovered you must take her to your own house, and give her what name you please. You do not suppose that I am going to sit all day nursing a baby?"

"Very well, sir, just as you please—only I thought that perhaps—however, I am sure mother will do her best for the child. Then, sir, for a name, what do you think of 'Margaret Seaton,' as that was the name of the ship, and the poor little girl calls herself 'Peggy.'"

"Margaret Seaton! a very good name!—any name you please, James," replied Forrester: and the young man took his leave, saying that his mother would call for the child the next day.

James was met in the hall by Mrs. Wal-

ters, who begged to have a few minutes' conversation with him in the kitchen. When she heard what had passed, the old lady looked very grave indeed, and said, "Mr. Winter, this will never do! this child must *not* leave the house; nor she shan't, if I can help it."

"But the doctor says she *must*, Mrs. Walters."

"Well, never mind that, James, only you do what I ask, and I'll engage that we shall manage it all very well. Now when you go home, get your mother to send a message, saying that you are all so busy just now with your hay, (which is true enough, you know,) that she can't conveniently take the child for a fortnight or so. Will you do this, James?"

"Certainly, Mrs. Walters, for you may be sure that I dont want to trouble mother with the child: only if the doctor won't

keep her, *I will;* for when I was helping to put her poor father into his coffin, I made a vow over his body, that his child should never want any thing as long as I had it to give. But I'll take your message to mother, and hope 'twill all be for the best."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Walters, "that's all I want you to do; for I cannot help thinking, that if we could but contrive to make my poor master really fond of the child, he would soon forget his melancholy. He'd have somebody to talk to and to attend to when he comes home from those dismal, solitary walks, instead of sitting moping by himself for hours together. Now, I verily believe," continued the benevolent old lady, taking little Margaret in her arms, "I verily believe that this child was sent from heaven on purpose; and as long as she is in the house, I'll take care to put her in his way as much as possible. Master al-

ways speaks more kindly to children than to any one else, and *this* child is as sweet a little creature as ever breathed; and though she can't speak much English, she has got as many winning, coaxing ways with her as an angel. So if she don't contrive to twist and twine herself round master's heart in a fortnight, why I don't know what sort of stuff his heart is made of, that's all! Mark my words, James Winter, if he don't soon love her like his own child, he's no *man* at all, but an *evil spirit*, and I am sure he doesn't deserve that any respectable woman should live with him."

CHAPTER V.

THE CONFLICT.

Was Mrs. Walters correct in her judgment of the composition of her master's heart, and of the insinuating, and love-compelling qualities of the little Margaret Seaton?

Did Forrester prove himself to be no man, but a demon in the human form, by rejecting, as a worthless gift, the pure free-will offerings of childish affection and confidence?

Nearly a fortnight had passed since the day when Mrs. Walters had communicated to James Winter her scheme for her poor master's benefit, and, according to her promise, she had contrived that the little girl

should spend a great part of her time in the parlour, when he was at home.

In the first few days but little progress was made. Forrester would rarely inquire for the child, and often appeared to have forgotten that she was in the house. But Margaret had not forgotten *him*, and, encouraged by Mrs. Walters, was always heard knocking at the parlour-door, and calling "Peggy," very soon after his return home. He could not refuse to admit his gentle visitor; and when once in the room, she would often be seated on his knee, or when that coveted situation was denied her, close by his side on the sofa, either engaged with her playthings, or trying to excite her melancholy companion to a game of romps.

So the child, by her constant endearments and winning partiality, laid close siege to

the hypochondriac's heart, and at length the approaches were won.

One afternoon, Forrester returned home from visiting a poor man upon whom he had performed a difficult, but very successful operation. He was therefore in a more cheerful and reasonable mood than usual. Mrs. Walters observed this, and said to Betty, "Now Betty, we'll try a little bit of an experiment. Master looks better than he has for some time, so I'll tell you what I'll do. I won't let the child go and knock at his door, and we shall see whether he will miss her, and ask for her. We shall see, Betty, we shall see."

"Ah! we shall see, indeed!" said Betty, shaking her head.

No very easy matter was it to persuade little Margaret to remain in the kitchen, when she knew that her papa, as she already

began to call him, was returned. But by means of coaxing, and bribes of buttered toast, the women managed to keep her tolerably quiet for about a quarter of an hour, till the parlour bell rang, and then the gathering storm of her indignation burst at once, when she found that Mrs. Walters would not let her accompany her. But the old lady, determined to go through her "little bit of an experiment," remained inexorable, and poor Margaret was left kicking and screaming in Betty's lap.

And now Mrs. Walters stood before her master, trying with all her might to do that which every one knows is exceedingly difficult, and to most persons absolutely impossible. Mrs. Walters endeavoured to make her face appear perfectly calm and unconcerned, when her kind heart was fluttering with anxiety for the success of her scheme, and

her motherly feelings sorely distressed in consequence of her assumed severity to the little girl. No marvel then that the good woman's face would not obey her will, and so she blew her nose, and wiped her eyes, saying, "Beg pardon, sir, but this cold in my head ——"

Taking no notice of her agitation or apology, her master made her happy, by inquiring at once where Margaret was, and why she did not come into the parlour as usual. Here, in justice to Forrester, it should be known that he had missed his affectionate little friend, and even felt a half-acknowledged desire for her company, as soon as he found himself in the solitude of his own room; but, since his return, he had been engaged in searching among his books, for a parallel case to that of the poor man whose bedside he had just quitted. But

his investigations were finished, and so he inquired, "Where is Margaret, Mrs. Walters? and why does she scream so?"

"In the kitchen, sir, with Betty."

"Why does she stay there? does she like the kitchen better than the parlour?"

"Oh dear no, sir," said the delighted housekeeper; "she wants to come in badly enough; but I was afraid she might trouble you, and she's making a fine noise about it. I'll go and bring her in directly."

When Mrs. Walters said this, she no doubt fully intended to perform her promise. but Margaret's impatience prevented her from doing so. She did not wait to be *brought in*. After exerting to the utmost her small ability in kicking, biting, scratching, and struggling, till she had worked herself almost out of her clothes, and quite into a furious passion, the little girl, finding that

nothing else could induce Betty to relax her iron grasp, at last effected her object by seizing a cup of hot tea, and dashing it over her tormentor's face and neck.

"Away with thee, then!" said the discomfited cook. "There, run in to master, do. Thee art as wild and unmanageable as he is, I do declare."

As some excuse for the child's outrageous conduct, we must remember her Indian education, and that this was probably the first time that any serious opposition had been offered to her inclinations. Moreover, her imperfect knowledge of English made her still more unreasonable and difficult to manage.

While Betty was engaged in wiping up the scalding deluge from her face, the victorious Margaret reached the door, dashed past Mrs. Walters, who at that moment en-

tered the kitchen, and before the stiff old lady could commence a pursuit, she was in the parlour. How different did she appear from the smiling, neatly dressed little Peggy, that Forrester had been accustomed to see! Alas! she bore about her many marks of the recent fierce contest. Her frock was rumpled and torn entirely off one shoulder; her shoes were kicked off in the struggle and left in the kitchen; her beautiful curls were in grievous disorder; and her face, neck, and bosom crimsoned with anger and exertion. As for her eyes, no one could have supposed that their mild, heavenly expression could have so soon been exchanged for a look of rage and defiance. But nature had been so bountiful in her gifts to this child, that though her appearance was that of a little fury, it was still of a very *beautiful fury*.

As the little Margaret Seaton, by the well-timed application of hot water, had gained an

undoubted victory over her antagonist in the kitchen, so now, by this passionate exhibition of her attachment, and by her tears of joy, when she found herself in Forrester's arms, she triumphed at length over his half-yielding coldness and indifference, and secured for herself a friend and protector, in place of the father who had sacrificed his own life for her safety.

When Mrs. Walters followed her unruly charge into the parlour, she found her master tenderly embracing the weeping child, and drying the tears that flowed down her cheeks. The good woman declared that the handkerchief was also occasionally applied to his own eyes; but as her vision was greatly obscured at the time by a superabundant supply of moisture, she might have been mistaken as to this point. So, as Forrester took no notice of her, and seemed quite unconscious of her pre-

sence, she left the room, but not till she had heard him exclaim, in a voice faltering with emotion, "Sent from heaven to comfort me? Thrown up by the mighty deep to rescue from utter misery and despair a wretch unworthy of such a blessing? Oh! if the agony I have endured might be received as some atonement! Come, then, sweet child, I accept thee as a most precious token that a merciful God has not cast me off for ever."

CHAPTER VI.

THE LETTER.

THE next day Forrester could not be easy till he had seen young Winter, and informed him of the alteration in his plans respecting little Margaret. James heard of his determination with great joy upon all accounts. He was glad to be relieved of the charge of the little girl, who would also be much better provided for in her present situation, than by a man of his own limited means; and he rejoiced on Forrester's account, that he had become attached to the child; for he fully agreed with Mrs. Walters, that his having such an object of interest and affection,

would be the most effectual means of chasing away those terrible recollections of the past, which, if indulged in, seemed likely to end in confirmed insanity. Even if the doctor's mental disease should not mend, or should increase, so as to render him an unfit protector for the child, James knew that he should receive certain information on the subject from his friend Mrs. Walters, and in this case proper steps might be taken to remove her.

Several persons who met Forrester on his way home from the farm that morning, could not help being struck with his altered demeanor. Instead of creeping slowly along in deep abstraction, and sometimes sitting motionless for an hour or more on a stile or bank, with his head sunk upon his chest, he now walked erect, at a brisk pace, and exceedingly astonished his humble acquaint-

ance by cheerfully returning their salutes as he passed them. Such an act of condescension from "the crazy doctor" was indeed most unusual and unexpected.

But though this sudden excitement had had the happy effect of arousing Forrester's energies, and of causing him for a time to throw off his secret weight of sorrow, it was very evident that the *cause* still remained, and could not long be forgotten. He was still a most melancholy creature, and at times almost heart-broken: but his seasons of terrible depression were certainly of shorter duration and of less frequent occurrence than formerly. It seemed as if the foul demon despair must at length be vanquished, by the gentle influence of such an affectionate, merry-hearted little companion, as Margaret Seaton.

Some months passed away, and the attach-

ment of this strangely-assorted pair increased almost daily. As little Margaret began to talk English instead of her Indian jargon, she became more of a companion to Forrester, who would take great delight in teaching his dear little adopted child the names of various objects, by means of sketches on a slate. So the dull rainy days, which, by confining him to the house, were formerly terrible visitations to him, would now often pass away happily, and cast no shadow over his spirits. Still he was occasionally subject, sometimes without any apparent cause, to grievous fits of despondency, out of which even the endearments of his little Margaret could not always arouse him. Mrs. Walters had remarked that a dark day was sure to follow the receipt of a certain letter with the London post-mark, and directed in a crampt lawyer's hand. What could Margaret do to

console her miserable companion at these seasons of despair? When the affectionate and sensitive child found that her prattle and playful attempts to engage his attention were unheeded, suddenly throwing off her gaiety, she would creep close to his side, and endeavour to get possession of his hand. There she would stand, peering into his wo-begone face with a most melancholy and inquiring look; and the scene generally ended in a passionate flood of tears, when she found that her attentions and caresses were still unnoticed and unreturned. Now this affecting display of her love had often the effect of rousing the melancholy man from his trance, and in endeavouring to soothe her distress he would for a time forget his own sorrows. One thing was remarkable, and proved that the child had gained a strong hold on his affections—though in

his clouded moments he was generally morose, and even savage in his manner to others, he was never known to show the least symptom of anger or impatience to Margaret, though the child, with confiding love, would frequently climb into his lap, and endeavour to draw away his hands from his face.

One day, when Forrester was out, the black, ominous-looking London letter arrived.

"There, Betty," said Mrs. Walters, as she returned with it in her hand; "there's an end of the fine weather! and poor master has been so cheerful for the last week or more. I'm pretty sure he's getting *fatter* too, Betty. Oh! if it wasn't for this tiresome letter! The writing isn't like a Christian's writing, neither, but all black and crooked. I declare I've half a mind ——." Here Mrs. Walters looked significantly at the fire.

"Now do!" cried Betty, "do burn it, Mrs. Walters! I'll never tell; and by good luck the child is gone out a walking with him, so he'll never know any thing about it."

The temptation to commit this messenger of evil tidings to the flames was hardly to be resisted; but a discovery would be dreadful, and Mrs. Walters stood undecided.

It is impossible to say how the matter might have been settled, but at this moment Forrester was heard in the hall. He had met the postman, and now sent Margaret into the kitchen for the letter. Mrs. Walters gave it into her hand with a melancholy shake of the head, saying, "Ah, poor dear! it will be a dull time of it for thee now."

When Forrester had retired to his own bedroom, he read the following:—

"Dear Sir,

"I am sorry to inform you that all my en-

deavours to ascertain the fate of your brother, Captain Richard Forrester, are still, as I feared would be the case, entirely unsuccessful. Not the smallest additional information has been obtained since my last.

"An overland mail from India brings intelligence respecting the ship wrecked on your coast last summer. Her name, as you supposed, was the 'Margaret Seaton,' and she was the property of a Mr. Frederick Seaton, who, with his only child, a little girl about five years of age, were returning to England in her. It appears that this gentleman had no near relations, either in India or England, therefore there is no probability whatever that any person will claim the child you have taken under your protection."

Here followed a statement of some money transactions; and the letter was wound up by the writer, Simon Searchwell, offering his

usual assurance of "devoted services," &c. &c.

At the first paragraph of Simon's communication, the face of the reader became much disturbed, and he threw the letter from him, exclaiming:—"No hope! none whatever! I must bear my heavy burden still—till it presses me down to the grave!" Then, after musing for some time, his eye accidentally fell upon the name "Margaret Seaton," in the latter part of the letter, which he had no sooner finished than he hastened down stairs, saying, "Old Simon has sent me good tidings for once. Margaret, Margaret, my dear! Where is little Margaret, Mrs. Walters?"

She was close at hand, and Mrs. Walters, expecting that the dreaded letter would have had a very different effect upon her master, was surprised and delighted to see him take the child in his arms, kissing her most affec-

tionately, and calling her "his *own* darling girl,"—"his *own* dear little Margaret."

"None can tear thee from me now," said Forrester, placing the sweet child on his knee, and gazing on his treasure with an expression of as much happiness as it was possible for his melancholy face to wear. He had felt great uneasiness about the possibility of the little girl's being claimed by some relation, and Simon Searchwell's information on the subject more than neutralized the effect of the bad tidings contained in the first part of his epistle.

"Now this will teach me never to have any hand in burning other people's letters," said Betty, when she heard the good news.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VICTORY.

The sweet-toned voice and merry laugh of the little Margaret Seaton have now been heard in the Last Halt for more than four years. That time has not elapsed without producing a gradual, but decided change, both in the once half-crazed Forrester, and in his adopted daughter. Margaret is much grown, of course, and, if possible, much improved; though that the latter result is not so inevitable as the former, sad experience in the mental and personal changes of children will testify. But little Margaret *is* improved; time has added a more perfect beauty to her

face; and as Betty has had no more cups of tea thrown over her, she is able and willing to add her testimony that the little girl's fiery and ungovernable temper has been quite subdued by the kind and judicious management of her protector.

(Within the safe enclosure of a parenthesis, which impatient readers may pass by at their pleasure, and which perhaps *one reader alone* will fully understand, the faithful historian of these early spring days of Margaret Seaton cannot refrain from inscribing a few words, in remembrance of her many endearing qualities, and of those most happy hours he has passed in her society. For little Margaret, though delightfully simple and child-like in her manners, possessed intelligence and companionable qualities very far beyond her years. And her voice—so sweet and clear, so melodious in its tones! Will its music ever

visit my ears again? A warm friend and admirer of the very young portion of the human race, (pure, bright blossoms, amidst a howling wilderness of grim and ungraceful maturity!) I am happy in the society of *all* children, and can number among my dearest and most valued friends, many sweet young creatures, whose smiles might banish melancholy from the most desolate heart. Thanks for your affection, my dear little friends! It is gratefully received and returned with interest. But when I think of *Margaret* and of bright days that are past, ah! then I cannot but repeat with a sigh, "Heu! quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse!"*)

* I think of thee!—And as the purer ray
Of sunshine maketh tapers dimly gleam,
So fond remembrance of a brighter day
Outshineth present joys; all these I deem
Faint stars extinguish'd in the morning's beam.

How has Margaret been employed during these four years? In learning to speak and read English, and in acquiring such knowledge as little girls of her age and station in life usually possess? We may be certain that Forrester has not neglected his duties as a gentle instructor to a most intelligent and attentive scholar. But his instructions have not been conveyed in the manner usually adopted by salaried teachers, and the happy Margaret knows very little of stated tasks, or of fixed hours for learning them. Still more ignorant is this fortunate child of the name and uses of that melancholy apartment, a *school-room*. Forrester and his gentle pupil may often be seen pursuing *their* studies, without the aid of books,—in the river-side meadows, in the silent woods, by the rocky margin of the sea.

But besides the usual occupations of a

happy country-bred child, Margaret has unconsciously been engaged in a more important work. By the irresistible influence of her affection and sweet companionship, she has accomplished the difficult task allotted to her to perform. *She has gained a victory!* triumphed over grim despair—chased away insanity from an over-sensitive mind, clouded by fearful recollections and remorse. The struggle is ended, and the victory is hers, for it has pleased a merciful God that the weak should overcome the strong.

Is Forrester then no longer a melancholy, sour-tempered man? He is a *thoughtful* man, and sometimes even a slight shade of melancholy will steal over his spirits; but perhaps we should not wonder at this, nor wish it to be otherwise, if the history of his past life could be disclosed to us.

And those visitations of terrible depression, those doubtful contests between reason and insanity? Many months have now passed away without the recurrence of the dreaded infliction: Forrester can even break the seal of a letter from his faithful agent, Simon Searchwell, with a steady hand, and can read the contents with calmness, though still not without some expression of disappointment. "It is a useless search," he will say; "Yet I would fain know the worst,—God willing:—but his mercy hath soothed the wound."

And in Forrester's manners and behaviour to his humble neighbours, what a change has taken place! Kind and affable to all, no provocation of silly question or remark can ruffle his temper, or call forth an angry reply. Even a *fee* might now be offered with impunity, though certainly with

as little chance of acceptance as ever. The name of the "crazy doctor" has long been discontinued, and almost forgotten, by his grateful pensioners, among whom he continues to labour with untiring zeal and benevolence. By day or night, in fine weather or foul, a call to the bedside of a suffering brother or sister is always promptly obeyed; for this benevolent young man seems to act strictly upon the principle, that the enviable and godlike power of healing has been bestowed upon him for the benefit of his fellow-creatures, and that he is fully accountable for the diligent use of the gift.

But though the "good Dr. Forrester," as he is now generally called, is kind and attentive to *all* his humble patients, he shows a strong partiality, for which he was always remarkable. His favourite patients are *young children*. If *these* require the aid of his skill, his

kindness and affectionate interest have no bounds; and where a cure cannot be hoped for, his attention is unwearied in devising the most effectual means for the alleviation of their sufferings. When Forrester's troubles occasioned him to leave an already extensive practice in London, his departure was deeply regretted by many an anxious mother, whose darlings had been snatched from the jaws of death by his extraordinary skill in this most interesting branch of his profession.

It is a glorious morning in June, and Forrester and Margaret are seated in the shade of a thick-leaved chestnut, in the trim little garden of the "Last Halt." Beautiful sight, that pensive, noble-looking man and graceful child, who love each other with such a pure, undivided affection! Forrester is reading, but not so attentively that he cannot take his

eyes from his book, to render prompt and oft-requested advice or assistance to little Margaret, who is endeavouring to copy a drawing, which, for want of a better support, she has pinned to the trunk of the tree before her.

But is not that the old postman hobbling up to the gate? Forrester comes forward to meet him, repeating, with deep feeling, from the book he has just laid down,

> "Give me but
> Something whereunto I may bind my heart,
> Something to love, to lean upon, to clasp
> Affection's tendrils round."

"But how is this?" he continues, when he has received the letters. "What means this? Old Simon again! Earlier by some weeks than I expected to hear from him. Doubtless the same evil tidings."

So Forrester leisurely opens the letter, repeating almost unconsciously, "Something whereunto I may bind my heart, something —Ha? what means this? Do I dream?" he exclaims, when the lawyer's cramped characters are at length unfolded to his view. He reads with eager, flashing eyes, and with face deadly pale and red by turns. Lo! now the irresistible truth is before him. It is no dreamy illusion, then, but a glorious certainty of happiness. Forrester clasps his hands together, and falls down on his knees upon the grass; but though his lips move, his thanksgivings are inaudible, save to that Being before whose throne they are offered up. Little Margaret, astonished at this violent emotion, throws her arms round his neck, and bursts into tears. Forrester presses her to his heart in silence,

for how can *words* express the overflowings of his happiness and love?

But what can old Simon have said to have occasioned this extraordinary scene? Read!

"DEAR SIR,

"I have at length the happiness to inform you that the investigation in which, at your desire, I have so long been engaged, has now, quite unexpectedly to me, terminated most successfully. One of the many agents employed by me in this business has just arrived from the West Indies, and has furnished me with most certain proofs that Captain Richard Forrester did *not* perish in the terrible affray on the river, when in self-defence your hand was raised against your brother's life. Severely wounded the unfortunate young man certainly was; but I have now before me documents which prove that he

perfectly recovered from his injury, and that two years after the encounter, he perished disgracefully in a drunken brawl in the West Indies. I grieve to add that the letter you received soon after the encounter, informing you that your brother had died of the wound you had inflicted, was written at his own request, by one of his profligate companions, who assisted in the attack, and who would have shared in the property Captain Forrester fancied would have fallen to him, in the event of your death. By this deception it is probable that your unfortunate brother hoped to put you off your guard, in case an opportunity should offer for another attack upon your life.

"I have only to add, that I shall retain the important documents above referred to, till I receive your orders respecting them.

"I have the honour to be, with continued offers of my best services,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient and devoted servant,

"SIMON SEARCHWELL."

THE END.

THE
VIOLET